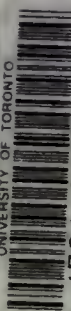



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AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE PERIOD STYLES
OF ENGLAND & FRANCE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
PERIOD STYLES
OF ENGLAND & FRANCE
WITH A CHAPTER ON THE DUTCH
RENAISSANCE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
HERBERT COLE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
W. G. SUTHERLAND



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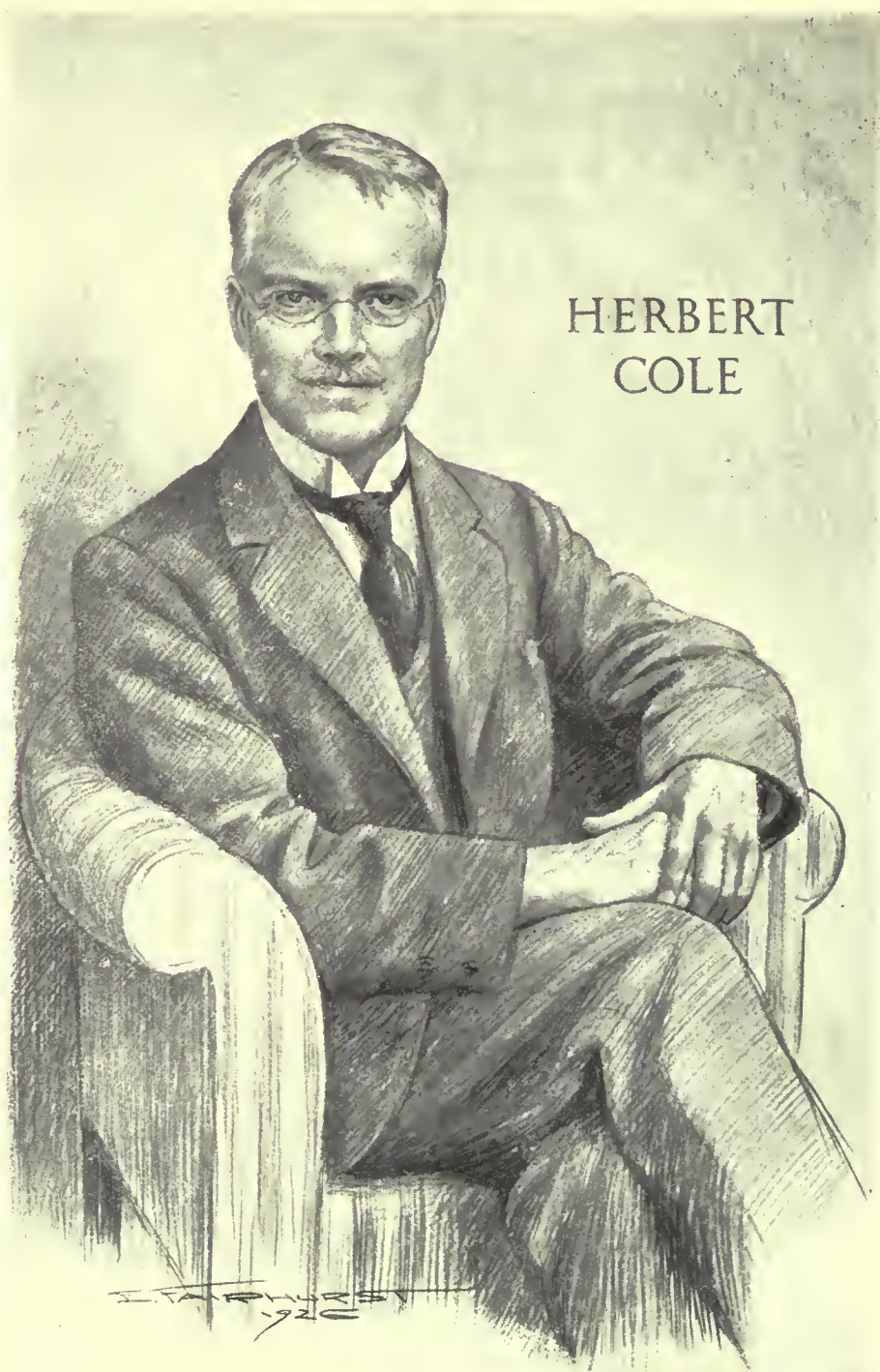
THE SUTHERLAND
PUBLISHING CO. LTD.
9 ALBERT SQUARE
MANCHESTER

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HERBERT
COLE

INTRODUCTION.

By W. G. SUTHERLAND.

This book is published under somewhat unusual circumstances, in that the author is many thousands of miles from this country at the time of publication, having been resident for some years in Australia.

This is the main reason why the introduction is not written by himself, as the publishers, and doubtless our readers also, would have wished.

The book is a reprint of a series of chapters contributed by Mr. Herbert Cole to *The Journal of Decorative Art* in 1916-17. Their merits entitle them to a wider appreciation than was possible in the troubled years during which they appeared, and hence it has been decided to republish them in book form.

The book is put forward, as the title indicates, to serve as an introduction to a subject of first-rate importance to all who have adopted, or propose to adopt, decoration or its allied crafts as a profession. Mr. Cole's lucid manner, alike in writing and in the drawings which accompany his chapters, fits him admirably to produce a work designed, in the main, for students. He has selected the essentials of his subject, and has avoided details which, though in a sense relevant, are not necessary in a work of this kind, and may tend to confuse the mind of the student.

His book is put forward, therefore, with the utmost confidence that it will meet with a ready appreciation from the craftsmen and students to whom it is addressed.

The object of this book is well described by its title. It does not pretend to deal exhaustively with so huge a subject as the decorative periods, but it does aim at giving the student a proper introduction to the subject, at giving him a grip of its essentials, and thus at putting him on the way to the completer knowledge which will come with further study.

The publishers believe that there is a real need for a book which will perform this initiatory function. Not seldom it happens that the student approaches the subject from a wrong angle, with the result that it becomes to him a confusion of irrelevant detail, rather than, as it should be, a study of enthralling interest.

Mr. Cole emphasises first, not what details characterise a given style, but what influences brought about its adoption, what habits of life and of mind caused the evolution of a particular type of decoration.

He shows us the beginnings of the Classic revival in England, its first unsophisticated interpretation at the hands of native craftsmen obviously torn between a desire to be up-to-date in their handling of the new ideas from abroad, and a lifelong habit of faithfulness to the older tradition. He shows us, again, the gradual tightening of the architect's grip of the craftsman, the resulting loss of freedom and interest in detail, balanced, it may be, by a greater measure of unity in the whole, but leading to the endless controversy as to whether the age of the free craftsman or that of the controlling master mind has produced the more memorable results.

Again, our Author shows us the Court of France

at the height of its gaiety, its folly, and its viciousness, a court divorced from any real contact with the life of the French people, and reflecting its inanities and its fatuity by the meaningless glitter and ostentation of the Rococo ornament in which it delighted.

He has shown us the relation of the great cabinet makers who arose in this country in Georgian times to the decoration of their day, and he has given us a glimpse of the decay of the dignity and grandeur of the Georgian style until it fell into the banalities of Victorianism.

We have felt again the fascination of the story in preparing Mr. Cole's finely written chapters for the Press, and we do not doubt that it will be felt no less by many who will read his book.

In a book which is mainly the gateway to a big subject, it is fitting to indicate the road which the student may travel when he has mastered what its pages have to teach him.

There are many books which can be recommended. Among the best and least pretentious is Glazier's *Manual of Historic Ornament*. Again, *A Handbook of Ornament*, by F. S. Meyer, is an invaluable volume, and *The Styles of Ornament*, by A. Speltz and R. P. Spiers, is well worth deep study.

Messrs. Batsford publish many admirable books dealing with British interiors, and those by Francis Lenygon and M. Jourdain are particularly to be noted.

Two modest volumes called *The Life and Work of the English People*, by D. Hartley and W. M. Elliott, while they aim at history from a new angle, rather than at decoration, contain a great deal that is of interest to the decorator, and will especially help him to realise how real is the connection between life and art, the latter being but one expression of the former.

When the young decorator has familiarised himself, by reading and observation, with by-gone styles, we would urge him to remember that they are the styles of a day that is gone, and their adaptation to the requirements of to-day is a matter calling for sense and judgment.

There are decorators who strive to make the drawing rooms of suburbia resemble Versailles or Hampton Court, and can see no incongruity in the attempt. It is not one of the objects of this work to assist such futile attempts. The object is rather to enable the decorator to understand the principles on which the old styles were built, the conditions which determined the forms they took, and the way in which the decorative problems confronted were met and overcome.

If the decorator understands these things, if he familiarises himself with the work of these fine periods, he will find that he has gained from them a sense of proportion, of line and of fitness that will stand him in good stead when he comes to tackle the problems of modern decorative work.

He will soon see that the literal translation of the old styles to the interiors of to-day can seldom be successful. Even if the proportions of the rooms to be treated are right, the people, their clothes, and their ways, will dispel the old time atmosphere,

and put the rooms and their inhabitants at odds.

Imagine a salon at Versailles with its rich detail and its glittering and artificial luxury, forming a fitting background for the no less artificial women and effeminate men who, with their silks and brocades, their powdered wigs and painted faces and their mincing steps, completed the picture. Given a room of the right proportions and a deep purse, the interior could be reproduced to-day without great difficulty. But the moment the breezy maiden of modern times, with her cigarette, her cropped or shingled head, and her swinging gait strolls in, the balance of the picture is shattered and the whole scheme is out of gear.

There is a use for the old styles in the work of to-day, but judgment born of knowledge must be applied to the problem, which, rightly viewed, is the adaptation of the old style, rather than an exact reproduction, and nearly always a simplified adaptation.

The question the decorator should ask himself is not "how much of this old detail can I cram into this room?" Rather it is "how can I adapt this old model to make it fit the requirements of modern people in a modern house?" Very often he will find that a client will possess furniture which is either old, or a copy of old work. It will be his function to provide a background in which such furniture will look right, but which will, at the same time, avoid the error of making the people who enter the room look wrong.

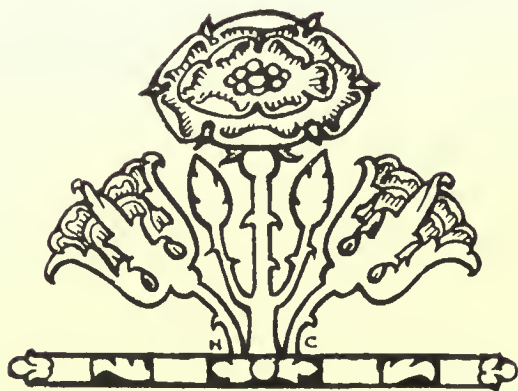
Again, it is quite legitimate to take an old style as a starting point, and to use it as a kind of theme to be varied at will. Suppose, for instance, a decorator has a room in which he desires to catch something of the daintiness and elegance of Louis XVI. work, but in which he intends to use stencilled ornament. If he understands the Louis XVI. style, if he is a master of the technique of the stencil, and if

he has an eye for colour and a sense of fitness, he may get a charming result, which will not, however, be Louis XVI., either in effect or in intention. It will be an experiment in decoration with an old style as the starting point, and with a knowledge of tradition and principle behind it.

There are those who profess to despise tradition in all its forms, who contend that new types of design and new forms of ornament can be evolved from a man's inner consciousness, without relation to what has gone before. It is the illusion of a feverish age. It is good that youth should press forward, and that experiments with new forms and new ideas should be made. But what the young modernist is apt to forget is that in the evolution of each of the great historic styles, experience was gained which can be applied to decorative problems quite unconnected with those styles, and that the young man who thinks he can start *de novo*, has to find out all over again for himself the things that a little patient study could tell him, and if he means to rediscover by himself the answers to all the questions that crop up in decorative work, he must be prepared for a lifetime of experiment.

Every landscape painter to-day knows that the distant landscape appears to be blue-grey, and he knows it because hundreds of years ago, somebody discovered it, and the result of that piece of observation became for ever a part of the knowledge available for those who care to learn.

There are many parallel examples in decoration. The wise man avails himself of the work of the past, and profits by the labours of by-gone masters who have met and conquered problems of decoration which recur in every age. He will attempt, not to break with tradition, but rather to use it as a means to new ends. It is to help him to do so that this book has been written.



CHAPTER I.

THE LAST OF GOTHIC.

The decorator of to-day is placed in a much more complicated position than his predecessor of ancient times. Whereas in the past one style of decoration gradually evolved into another by easy stages, revivals of all styles occur in our day, and we are expected to be conversant with the ornament of four or five centuries. How many of us realise that we are living in a period of renaissance? For never was there a time when the styles of past ages have been studied with deeper interest and intelligence. This has been going on for twenty or thirty years. Architects, decorators, furniture and textile designers, craftsmen of all kinds, connoisseurs and amateur collectors as well, have all studied the buildings, arts and crafts as shown in the history of our own country.

Seeing that the furnishing and decorating firms in any place of importance to-day exhibit objects ranging from the style of the 16th century to the latest phase of modernity, nothing should be necessary to bring conviction to the decorator that unless he wishes to be hopelessly behind the times he must be ready to work in accordance with modern demands and to bring an intelligent knowledge to bear upon present day problems. It is proposed, therefore, to begin our survey of period styles with the advent of the Italian Renaissance in our own country. It will be quite near enough for our purpose to say this happened when Henry VIII. came to the throne, about the beginning of the 16th century, 1509. Up to that time Gothic art in its various phases had evolved in even progression for four or five hundred years and then a new and foreign influence took root in our national art. It must not be supposed, however, that the Gothic style died a sudden death on the appearance of the "Great Widower"; a considerable amount of overlapping of styles occurred, and resulted in what is generally known as "Tudor," taking its name chiefly from that interesting monarch.

The strange new influence was the style of the Renaissance, a mighty upheaval of thought and new ideas born out of the study of the ancient monuments of art and literature left by Greece and Rome. Italian artists and writers brought about this "re-birth," for that is the meaning of the word; the invention of printing accompanied the re-discovery of ancient art and learning and played its part in spreading the new influence over the greater part of Europe. Through France and Flanders it travelled to England, gradually transforming the arts of our country till they became more and more Italianised, dying at last in a formal classicism, the direct antithesis of the northern Gothic spirit, towards the end of the 18th century.

Returning for the moment to the beginning of the 16th century, we find the Renaissance work

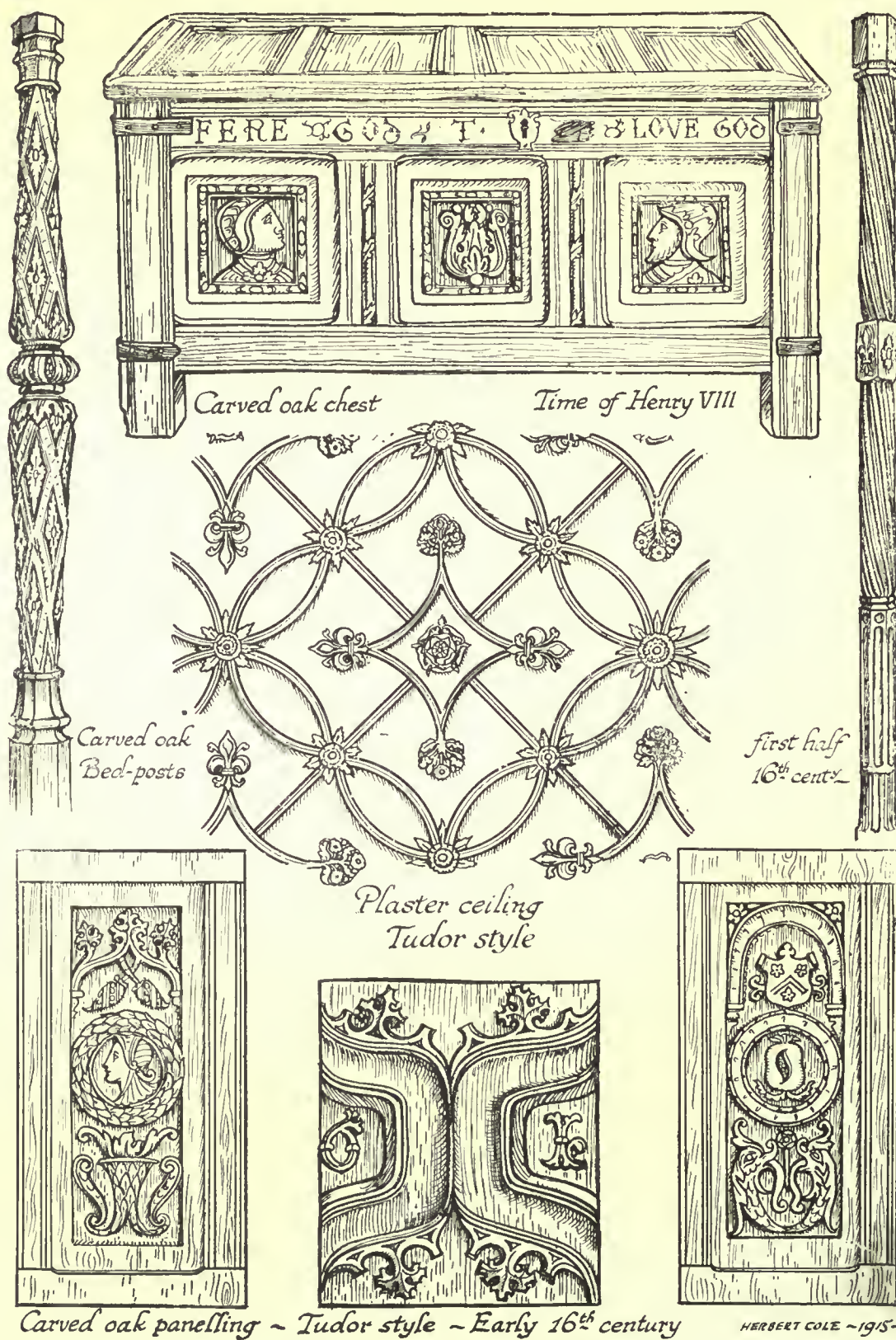
creeping into the details and even in direct combination with Gothic aims. The late form of Gothic arch, the flat or depressed kind with low apex, is often called the Tudor arch, and while most typical of the reigns of Henry VI. and Henry VIII., it lingers on through subsequent reigns for one hundred years or more.

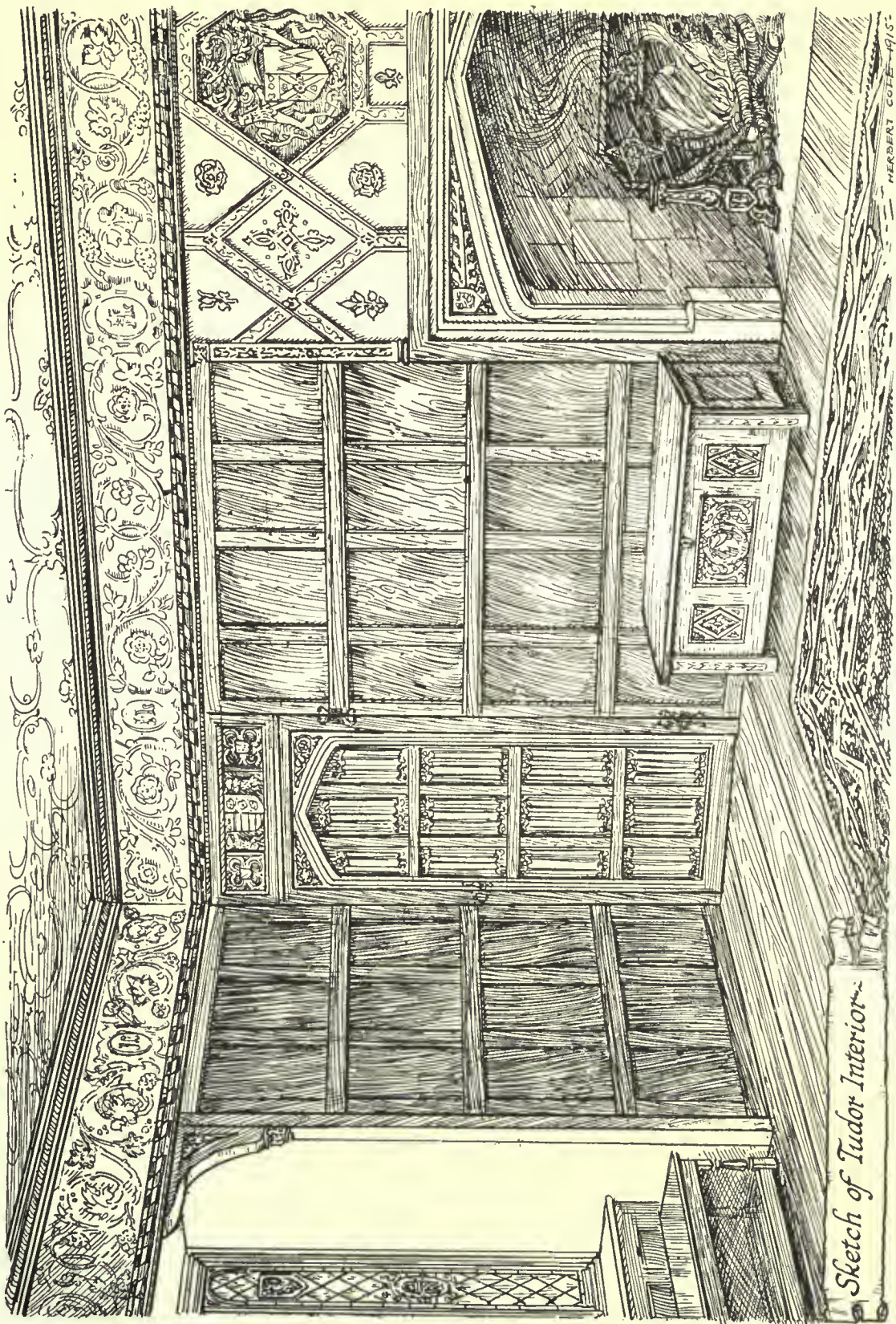
As most Gothic decoration is included in ordinary church decoration, it is irrelevant to our present purpose, but Tudor is a good starting point for discussion when treating of modern decoration, as architects and designers still draw upon it for suggestion and inspiration in their work to-day. In Tudor times, the dwellings of Englishmen were ceasing to be castles and fortresses built for defence, and becoming more and more developed into comfortable homes. The rough stone walls of the interiors were beginning to be covered with smooth plaster or panelling, so also the ceilings were improved and decorated with these two materials, though tapestries on the walls and carved beams on the ceiling still lingered on. When once the plasterer had discovered the decorative possibilities of his material, we cannot wonder at the infinity of superb design still to be seen in those beautiful combinations of floral and geometrical ornament for which this period is so justly renowned.

A typical example, not so elaborate as many of these are, is given on the next page. The gradual introduction of classic details into the existing Gothic work can also be seen in the three specimens of wood panelling. The two bed-posts and carved chest on the same page will give a good idea of the kind of furniture then in use. Chairs of the Tudor period are very rare indeed, and for this there is a reason. Chests, stools and benches were the general seating accommodation of those days. A chair was still a symbol of authority or state, and lent its occupant a sort of prestige. The lord, baron or head of the family probably sat in one at the head of the table, the rest of the company not aspiring to the same dignity, but as comforts grew in number and variety chairs became common property.

Carpets also began to make their appearance about this time; some of an eastern character may be observed in Holbein's portraits of Henry VIII. and the notables of his Court.

Reverting once more to the plasterer's art of this period, it may be noticed that the frieze and the overmantel were often treated with decorative plaster work, as well as the ceilings. The linen-fold panel, a conventional design imitating the backward and forward doublings of drapery, is a well-known detail in the woodcarving of this time. It is shown on the door panels in the sketch of a Tudor interior on page 3.





Sketch of Tudor Interior

CHAPTER II.

ELIZABETHAN.

The reign of Henry VIII. was a period of immense activity in all that related to building and the work of the craftsman. Indeed it was the craftsmen of the day who designed the buildings and carried out all the details of their interior and exterior decoration. Little is heard of the architect in the sense in which we use the term to-day, and most of the domestic work of the time, as also the Gothic work which preceded it, may be called "craftsman's architecture." The master builder relied on his experience and the tradition in which he had been trained in order to meet the demands of his patrons. If drawings were made at all before commencing to build they were probably only in the nature of rough sketches of general planning, not by any means elaborated with preconceived intention like the designs of later times. It was a method which placed convenience and utility before unity and premeditated design, and much of the oddity and picturesqueness of our old country houses is due to the liberty enjoyed by the old builder-craftsman, and the manner in which a house "grew" under his directions. But in Tudor times, under the influence of the Italian Renaissance, other demands arose. Palaces like Hampton Court and Nonesuch were reared under such patrons as Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII., and the very nature of the work demanded something more palatial, impressive and dignified than the ordinary country house. In such cases it cannot be denied that the builder-craftsman rose to the occasion and produced works of great architectural beauty and exquisite decoration, and if space allowed it would be delightful to include specimens of the excellent work of the period in the elaborate roofing of carved timber work, the richly decorated panels and staircases, and the intricate patternings in geometrical or flowing line of the window glazing. After Henry the Eighth's reign there was a certain lull in the activity, and the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary are not noticeable for any great advance or change in style.

With the reign of Elizabeth, however, there is evidence that, in some measure at least, the influence of the controlling architect made itself felt. There are drawings, preserved in the Soane Museum in London, made by John Thorpe, who lived and worked in the days of Elizabeth and James I., which show that a systematic study of house-planning combined with careful calculation for effect in the matter of proportions, perspectives, elevations and symmetrical composition was now in process of development. Many of the nobility and educated people of the time had also turned their attention to the study of architecture, and it is necessary to know this when making a retrospective survey of the structure and decoration of the buildings of the period. The Elizabethan style itself shows that this state of things was not an unmixed blessing, for half-digested and partially absorbed details of Italian architecture and decoration were often thrown together in a topsy-turvy manner. Enthusiasm for these foreign products often resulted in a medley of orders and meaningless decoration. Grotesques and naturalistic ornaments were piled indiscriminately

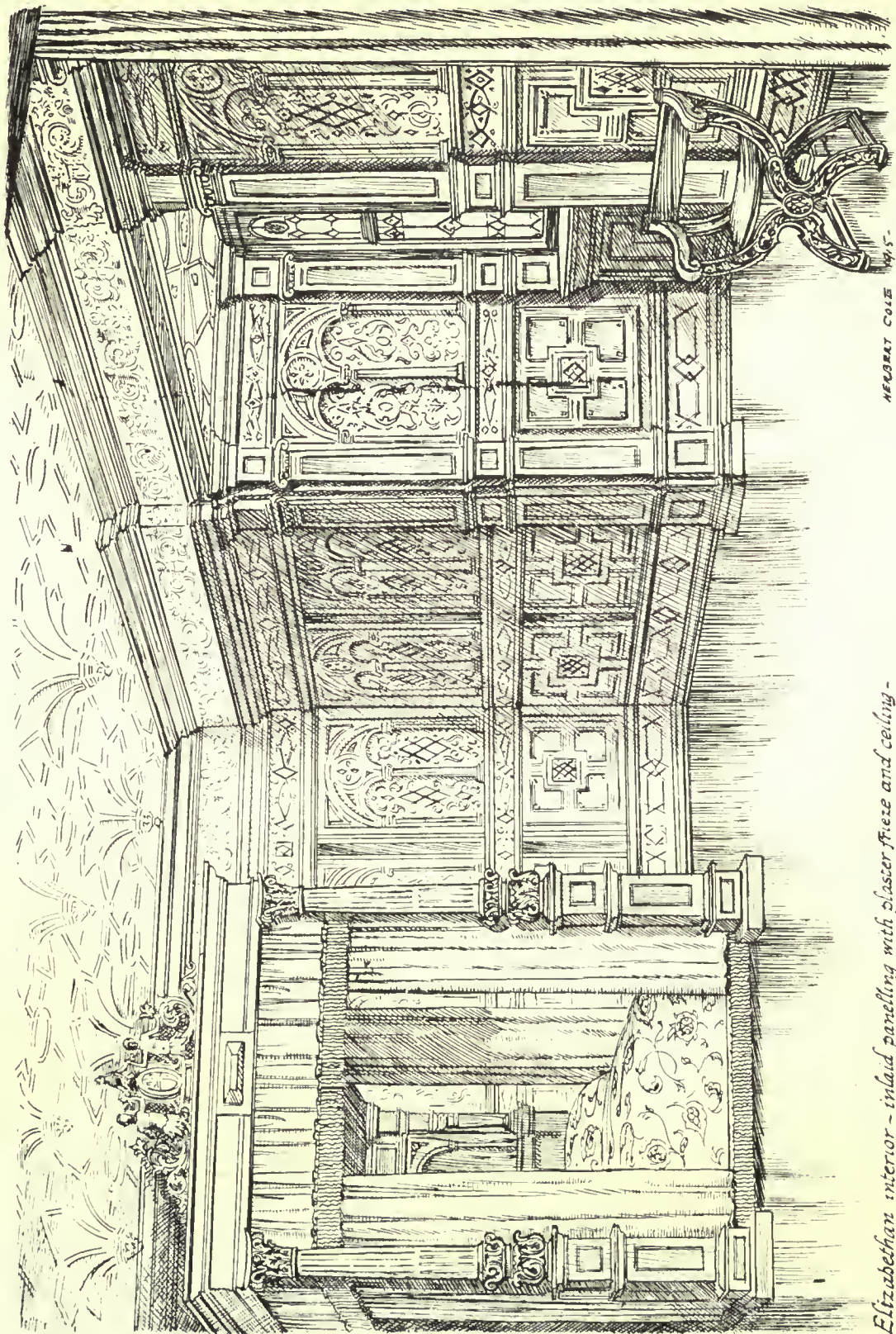
upon bizarre and extravagant perversions of columns, brackets and pilasters.

Heads of lions and other strange monsters were grouped with caryatides, trophies of weapons, strapwork, cartouches, and many other curious ornaments, and in its most exaggerated form the Elizabethan style is not to be recommended for direct imitation. Let it not be supposed, however, that beautiful work was lacking either in the matter of design or craftsmanship, but it is so easy for the decorator to fall unconsciously into the vices, rather than the virtues of a style for the simple reason that the latter are the more difficult to attain, that a word of warning may not be out of season or inappropriate.

It must be remembered that the Elizabethan style is a transitional period; Tudor proper, and even our native Gothic were not extinct, and Italianised classicism was not wholly understood. With the rise of the Renaissance, Italians, Flemings, and Germans had all been employed on works in this country, grafting their own peculiar versions of style upon that of the English craftsmen. The long-established and sturdy tradition of the latter did not give way without a struggle, and that struggle is evident in their work. Thus we may derive from these facts an explanation of the composite and conglomerate character of the Elizabethan style; the wealth of new elements of decoration and the fascination of a foreign style so entirely different from established custom led to its somewhat riotous employment; judgment and appropriate use were forgotten in enthusiasm for novelty.

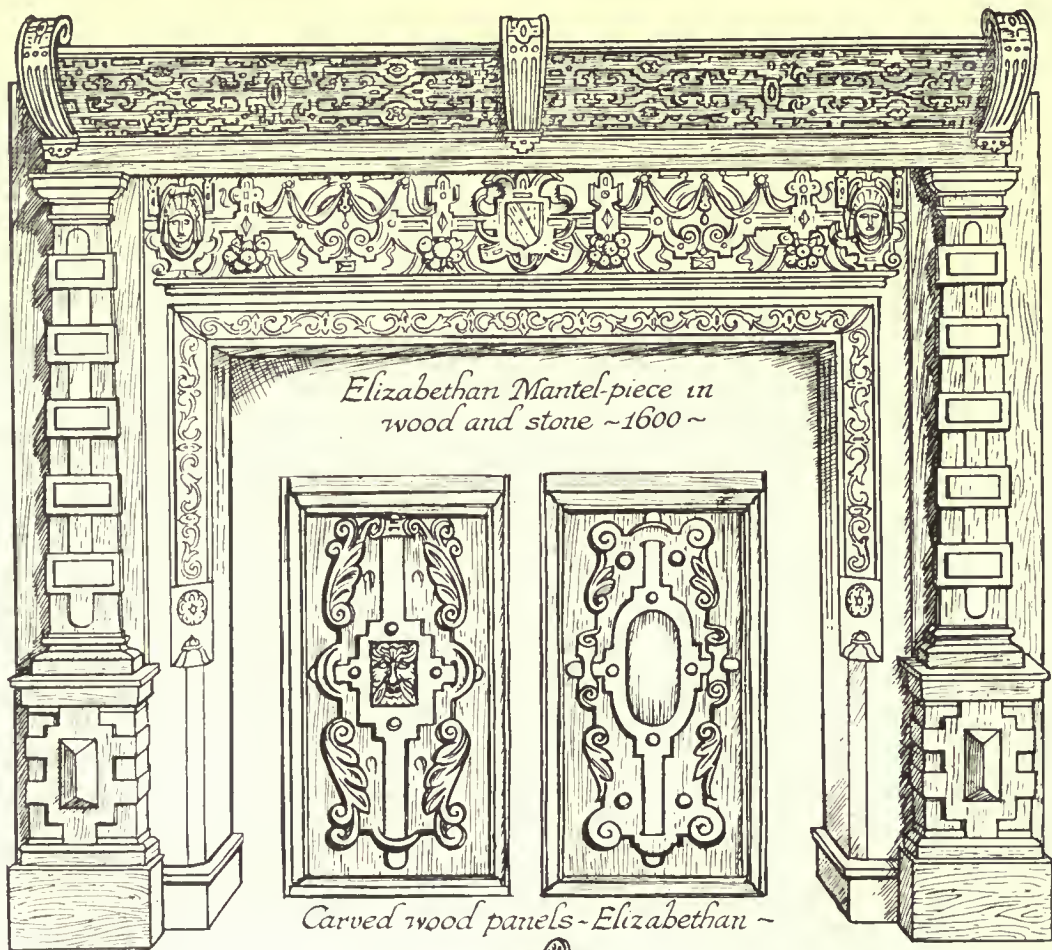
The drawing of an Elizabethan interior on p. 5 gives an example of the style in its purer aspects. Italian influence, especially in the matter of refinement, is very marked. The panelling is inlaid with conventional patterns, both in dark and light woods. The effect is very beautiful and sufficiently restrained, the grotesque and fantastic are absent, and the effect depends upon less extravagance of detail than is usually the case in the period. In the chimney piece on p. 6 is evidence of the more ordinary characteristics of the time. Plain pilasters were not enough, and their pedestals must also share the fondness for elaboration of surface. Yet in spite of these foibles there is much to admire in the general effect of the different combinations of relief in the carving and contrast of materials. The two separate panels inset are good typical examples of the ornament of the period, whether employed for interior or exterior purposes.

The chair is a beautiful specimen of inlay and carving in combination, and it is well shaped and fine in proportion as well. The pilaster again shows Italian influence, yet the motive seems reminiscent of Tudor rose applied to scroll lines. The pedestal below and the grotesque bracket above, are types of ornament frequently recurring in Elizabethan work. The workmanship varies from crudity to very careful finish, but the chair and pilaster are as delicate and refined as other examples are uncouth and incomplete in execution.



Elizabethan interior - inlaid panelling with plaster frieze and ceiling -

NEUBERT COLE



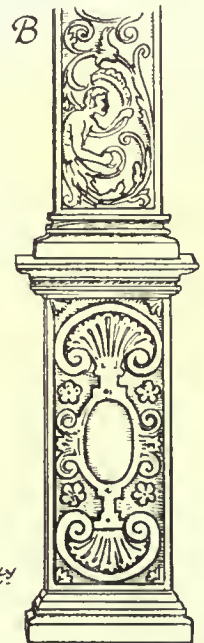
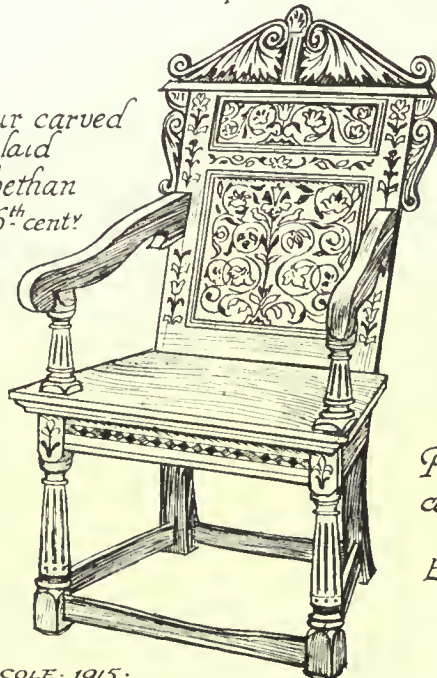
*Elizabethan Mantel-piece in
wood and stone ~1600~*

Carved wood panels - Elizabethan ~



A

*Chair carved
and inlaid
Elizabethan
late 16th cent.*



B

*A & B
Portions of
carved wood
Pilaster ~
Elizabethan
late 16th cent.*

HERBERT COLE. 1915.

CHAPTER III.

JACOBEOAN.

No definite line can be drawn between the Elizabethan and the Jacobean periods of decoration. It is difficult to determine how soon the Elizabethan style merged into that of the reign of James the First, in fact, the naming of styles after the reigning monarch is an arbitrary division of work, giving but a general description, mainly for convenience in dating. A moment's reflection will show that one style could not suddenly change or develop into another merely from the accession to the throne of a new king or queen; it is a rough and ready arrangement, and we are obliged to accept it. By the perversity of things in general, no monarch's name has been popularly tacked on to the period represented by the reigns of Charles the First and Charles the Second, though the work of that time is characterised by a difference from Jacobean quite as great as that which contrasts Elizabethan with Jacobean. To say that Jacobean is Elizabethan sobering down towards a better understanding of Italian Renaissance would be, perhaps, a true general description. By the way, it may not be known to every reader that the term Jacobean is derived from "Jacobus," the Latin form of James, and his majesty of that name, first of England and sixth of Scotland, is so described on the coins issued in his reign and in official documents.

In all the medley of forms and decorative elements of this period, there is a certain type of work which can be called truly national and definitely marked in character. I refer to that distinctive phase of design mainly to be seen in the craft of the wood carver, and also in that of the plasterer of that day. Take a look first at the oak pilaster on p. 8, and then contrast it with the enlarged detail of the cupboard panel on the same page. The pilaster is decorated with an extravagant series of strap-work, busts, cherub heads, drapery festoons and semi-architectural forms, but the cupboard panel is much more coherent, and contains delightful touches of natural form, rendered with a straightforward simplicity of purpose in regard to both design and execution. A closer examination of any one of these characteristic pieces which can be seen in most good museums, and often in the shop windows of the antique dealer, will reveal a rational treatment of the material which is truly admirable. All the forms show the shape of the gouge and chisel marks; it is frankly wood-carving without the attempt at smooth modelling so frequently seen in other work. Beautiful as much Italian wood carving undoubtedly is, there is a smoothness as of metal or marble about it which smacks of a false ideal in the mind of the workman. Here in these Jacobean examples the treatment of the forms is dictated by the qualities of the tools, and by what can be produced with the material on direct common-sense principles. Notice the leaf patterns on balusters, mouldings, borders, arch, spandrel, guilloche ornaments, and rosettes; they are all frankly cut and decorated with the touch of gouge and chisel. There is a strong flavour of Eastern work in the floral panels of this period, probably because the spacious days of Elizabeth and the discoveries of her navigators favoured the importation of the precious objects of the Orient, and in the following reign this element became more obvious. The panel from the Jacobean cupboard above mentioned might well

have been inspired by some Persian tile or textile pattern, yet it is distinctly the work of a British craftsman, and skilfully adapted to its own proper material. The same kind of sturdy design and richly tooled decoration is to be seen in the chair and the court cupboard shown on the same page. The latter piece of furniture corresponded somewhat to our modern sideboard. It is a substantial and beautiful object, and the combination and contrasts of carving, inlay and plain panelling are very effective and well designed. Colour and beauty of surface are not the least of its charms, for besides the carving there are touches of black and yellow inlay on the dark oak, and against such a background one can imagine the effect of those fine tankards and cups produced by the silversmiths of the age.

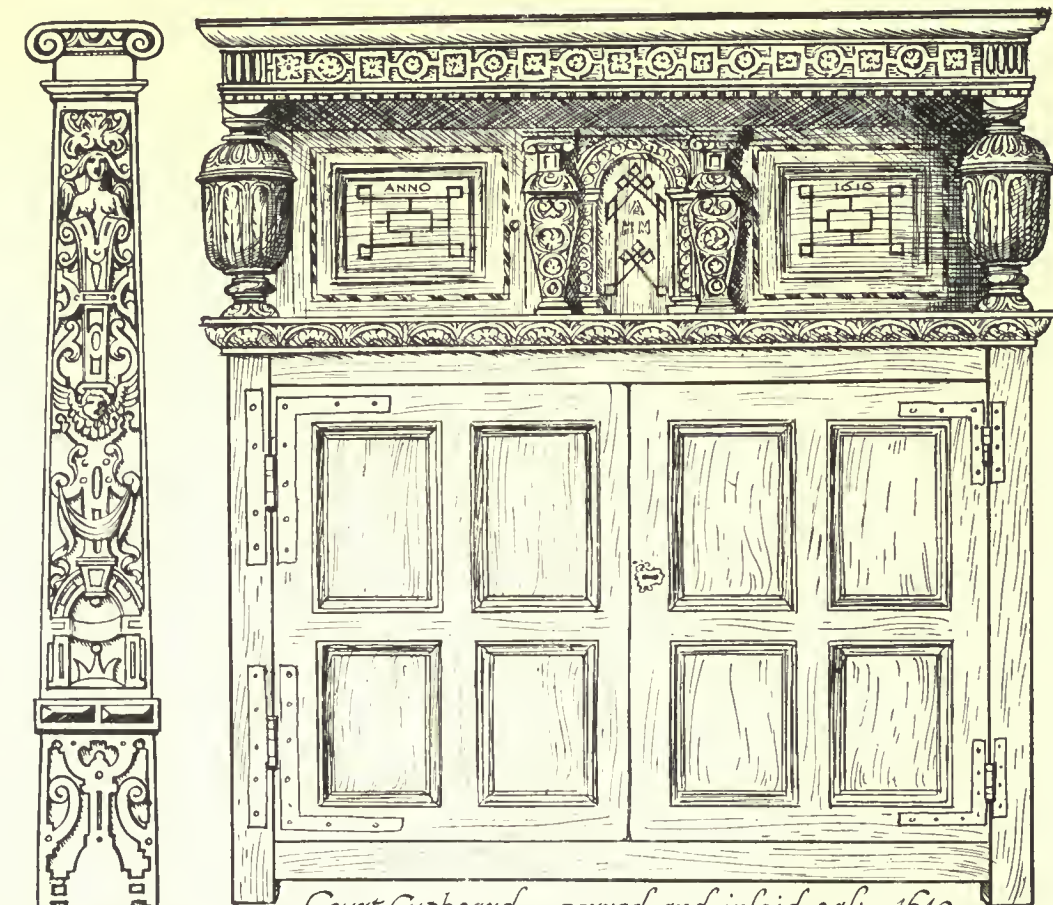
The art of the plasterer continued to be employed on the ceilings, friezes and chimney-pieces of this period, and some of the most splendid examples of this beautiful craft are those executed in Jacobean days.

An endless variety of treatment was applied to the plaster decoration of the ceilings; elaborate geometrical plannings had their ribs or mouldings ornamented with floral designs, or they enclosed or framed panels fitted with such patterns. Heraldry also played a great part in the plasterer's art, a central coat of arms being frequently supplemented by family badges, mottoes and other armorial insignia. The chimney piece was generally the crowning feature of the room, and if not carved in wood or stone, or both combined, it had an overmantel in plaster, and here again heraldic design was often the main theme of decoration. The frieze round the room was sometimes also of plaster, and in some cases it was very deep and filled with designs containing animal forms and decorative trees. Interesting examples of friezes of this kind may still be seen at Hardwicke Hall, Derbyshire, and at Aston Hall, Birmingham.

The drawing of an interior on p. 9 is a fine example of early Jacobean work, the date being about 1606. The panelling is of oak, and the pleasant proportions and variety of spacing give an excellent total effect. They are, by the way, divided here and there on other sides of the room by pilasters similar to the one on p. 8 above mentioned.

The fireplace and the ceiling are the two features upon which the ornament has been expended, and the decoration of the former is typically Jacobean. The Royal Arms of James the First are boldly and cleverly carved, much skilful undercutting being used to obtain strong contrast in light and shade. The frame of the fireplace is in white stone, with beautifully carved acanthus moulding and panel of birds and animals in foliage of conventional character. The supporting pilasters, grotesques, fretwork pediment and obelisks all partake of the extravagant and unrestful feeling which we have before noticed. Another strange contrast consists of the two statues set in niches at each side and surrounded with a sort of dog-tooth ornament, coarse in scale, but framed by small detached columns, pedestals, and mouldings much more refined in style.

In many an old parish church may be found the elaborate family tomb, containing most of these curiously mixed elements of the Elizabethan and Jacobean styles, and for forming an acquaintance with the work of the architectural carvers and



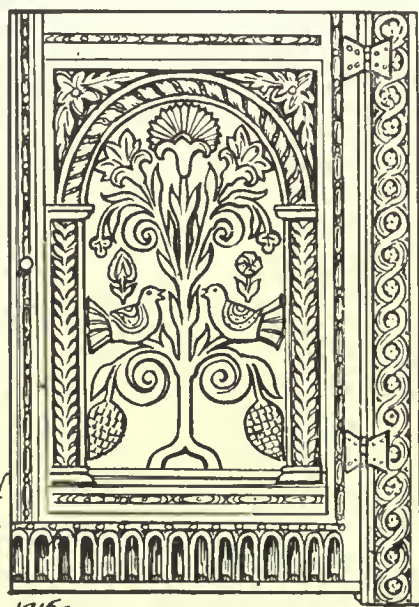
Court Cupboard ~ carved and inlaid oak ~ 1610 ~

JACOBEOAN WOODWORK

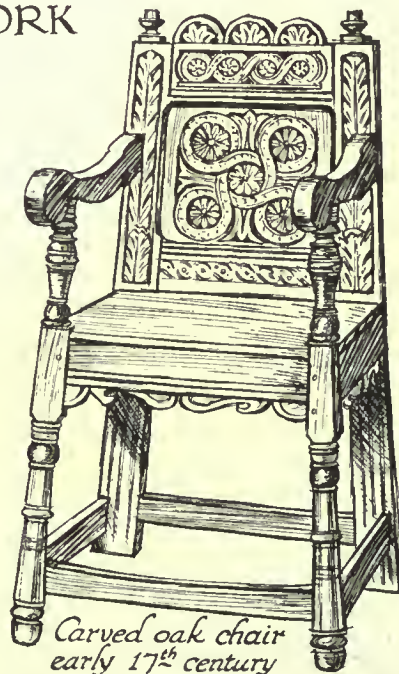


*Oak pilaster
early 17th
cent^y*

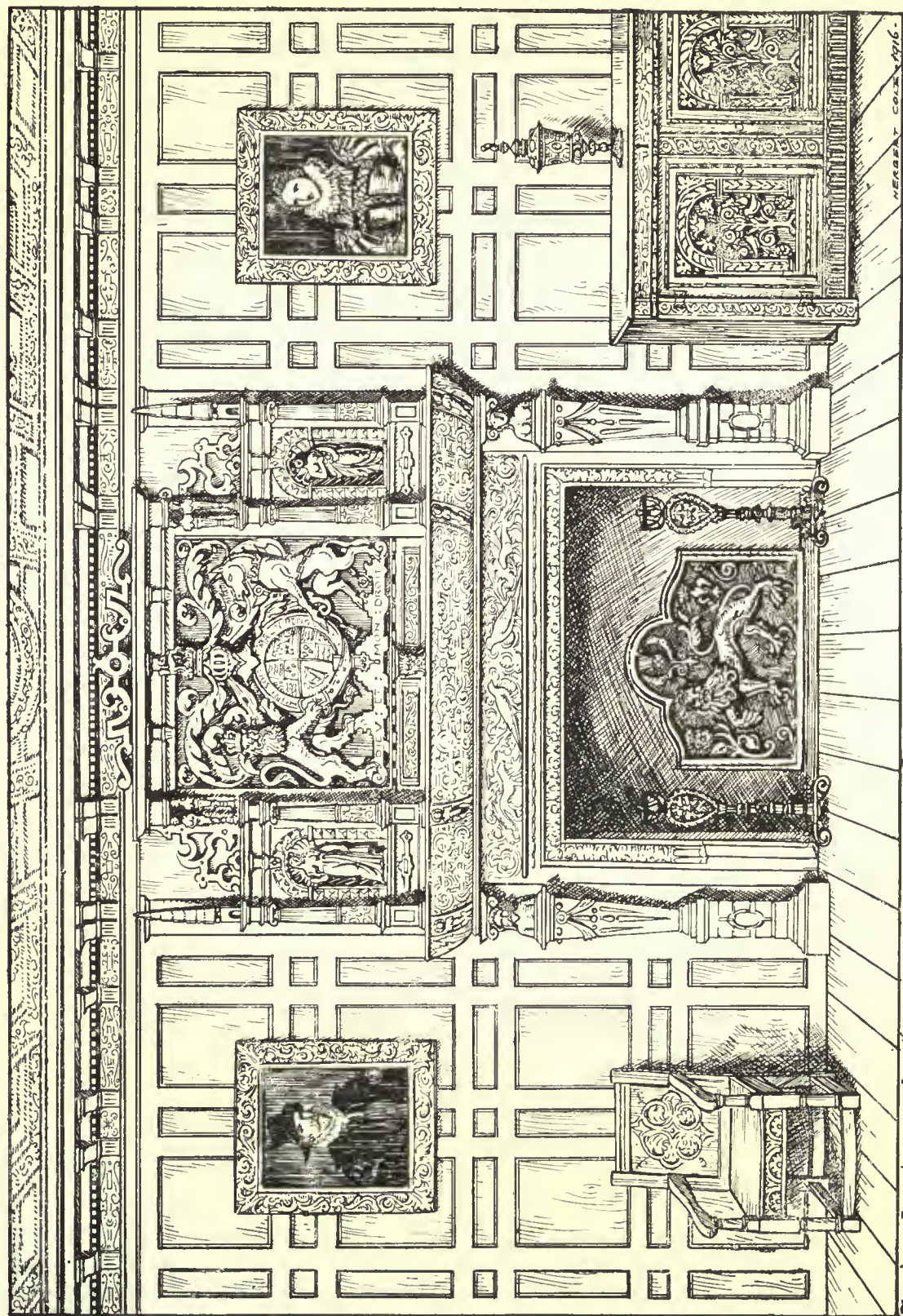
*Panel from
Oak cupboard
early 17th cent^y*



HERBERT COLE 1916-



*Carved oak chair
early 17th century*



Jacobean Interior - early 17th cent.

designers of the times, they are excellent objects for study. They often contain black, white or coloured marbles, alabaster or painted and gilded stone, and sometimes these materials were employed on the mantelpieces of the interior of a mansion or palace. From the similarity of these objects in many parts of the country, it is supposed that stock designs and pattern books were largely used, sometimes with more enthusiasm than discrimination. The moveable furniture of the rooms still partook of the massive and weighty style, as though oak was plentiful; indeed, very few other woods were used in the best work of this time, and we must be grateful to the hard and durable quality of the material for many excellent examples preserved for our study, criticism and appreciation.

The fireback shown in the drawing is a good example of bold and vigorous design and modelling well adapted to its purpose. The fire-dogs, or andirons, are also an interesting pair, the grotesque lion heads and small decorative knobs being of brass. Their function was to serve as supports across which the huge logs were slightly raised from the hearth, not for resting poker or tongs against as we sometimes see them used now. Of plaster ceilings more will be said in future chapters. Some good embroideries may also be found of the reign of James the First, which began in 1603 and ended in 1625.

Two features of Elizabethan and Jacobean houses which deserve special notice are the staircase and the long gallery. Of staircases there are many fine examples extant, and when the great hall of the early Tudor days ceased to be a living apartment, the staircase became an important feature upon which the craftsmen expended their skill. They vary from plain examples with simple balusters to others with the most elaborate carving—indeed the carving was frequently too elaborate, every portion being covered with ornament of that heterogeneous and fantastic character which we have already noticed while making our survey of these periods. The newel-posts are not only carved all over, but often surmounted with heraldic animals, figures, or monsters. Landings interspersed between the groups of steps allowed of the necessary turnings and very interesting and beautiful effects result from these arrangements. The lights and shadows cross each other from window and wall as the ascent is made, light from a window throwing out the carving and polish of surface into high relief, or viewed from below presenting a dark silhouette of pierced woodwork of intricate pattern. Gates were sometimes placed at the lower end of the stairs in order to prevent dogs from wandering over the upper part of the house and are known as "dog-gates" in consequence. Great houses like Hatfield, Haddon and Knole, possess very fine examples of these staircases. Aston Hall, Birmingham, now a public museum, also has a fine specimen. In the mediæval house of pre-Tudor times the great hall was living room, dining room, and for most of the retainers and domestics, sleeping room also. As the house developed, other rooms were added for greater privacy and comfort, and the hall became what it is to-day, the entrance and key to the various rooms or suites of apartments, which branch from it by doors and passages on the ground floor or from the staircase and landings on the upper.

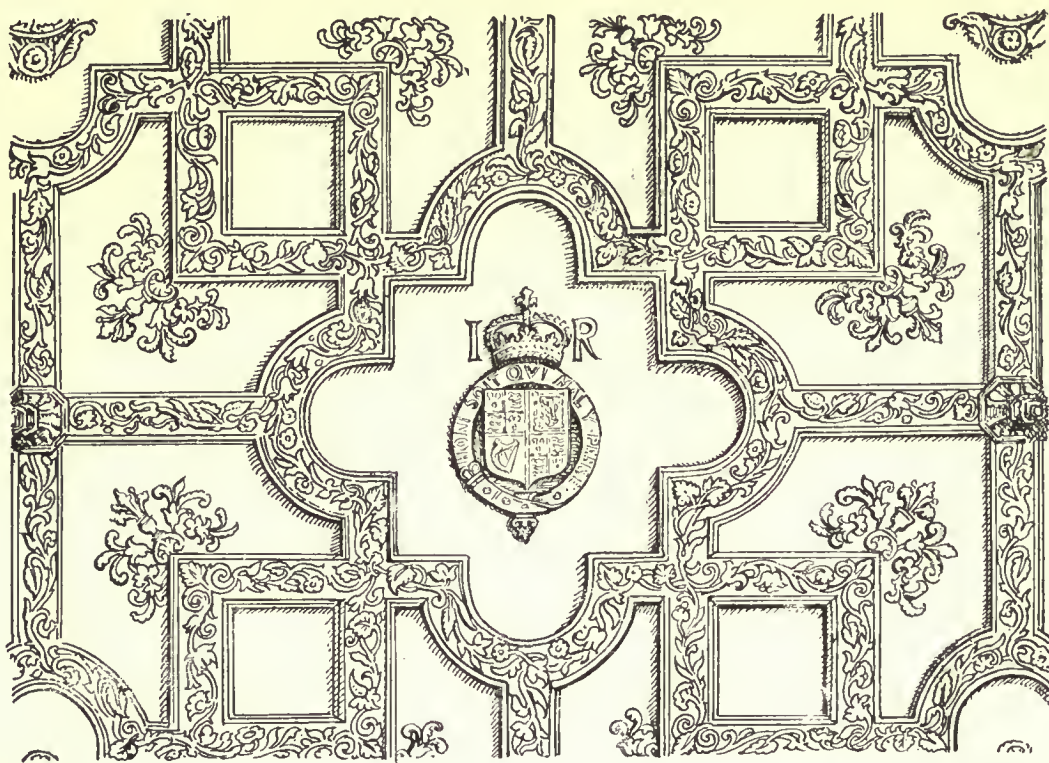
It is an interesting study to trace the growth of the English home from the remote and semi-barbarous times, when security and defence were the chief consideration, to the days when comfort, pleasant situation, and, finally, architectural beauty, splendour

and luxury became possible. In the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods we have without doubt arrived at the last-mentioned stage, and a perfect epidemic of mansion and palace-building spread over the land. The long gallery in a house of this period was an apartment on the upper floor, generally running along one whole side or front of the building, and commanding a pleasant view of garden or extensive country through its row of large and spacious windows. It was used as a meeting place or promenade for gentle exercise in wet or inclement weather. Panelled with oak or hung with tapestries, chairs and benches were placed at convenient intervals, while a bay or oriel window-seat provided other accommodation for rest and leisure. Gradually, as the taste for works of art grew more common, it resolved itself into the picture gallery; family portraits began to adorn the walls, and bronzes, marbles, pottery and other treasures were arranged as supplementary decorations or objects of interest.

The furniture and decorative details of the Jacobean period are rich and examples copious in number. The carved oak dining-table on page 12 is a fine specimen of that bold and massive style of design and expressive craftsmanship so typical of the age. Its proportions are ample and generous, and the richness of the carved panel and baluster legs contrasts well with the plain top and foot rail. We may notice again in passing the effective ornament on the moulding below the panel formed of deeply-cut gouge marks, by means of which strong contrast of light and shadow is obtained. The carved ornament of this period is well worth renewed study, for it will yield valuable results to the intelligent designer.

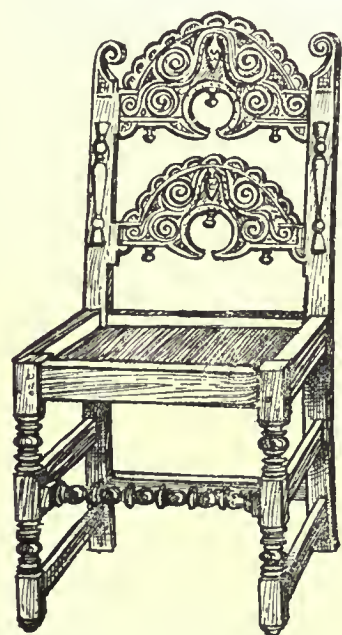
The armchair on the same page is another example of appropriate and well distributed decoration. No prominent carving interferes with the sitter's comfort, and the various patternings are agreeably interchanged with plain spaces. Wood-turning is largely employed in this period, generally in conjunction with carving, and when not too frequently repeated the effect is pleasing. There were some examples, however, where this mechanical art is overdone, and the pieces covered with bead-like knobs which give a somewhat savage aspect to them when considered as English furniture. I overheard a visitor at South Kensington Museum describe them as "looking like the work of Fiji Islanders." Fortunately, those answering to this description are exceptions and curious freaks of the period rather than typical examples. The amount of turned work on the two chairs given on pages 11 and 12 is tasteful in proportion to the carving, and no reasonable objection can be brought against it. The small side-board again is a sturdy and substantial piece of furniture, not over-decorated, but with a satisfying quantity of rich ornament of the best Jacobean style.

A portion of Jacobean ceiling design is also given to supplement the drawing of an interior shown in our last chapter, and to which it belongs. Geometrical planning and floral ornamentation are here seen in admirable combination, and if the reader will continue the pattern in the mind's eye he will realise the variety of forms resulting from the repetition of these curved and rectilinear spaces over the surface of the ceiling. The arms of James the First are placed in the centre, and the corresponding panels are occupied by heads of heroes or "worthies," Hector, Alexander and others. The floral ornament is very charming, and it is trailed over the mouldings in an easy, flowing and ingenious manner.

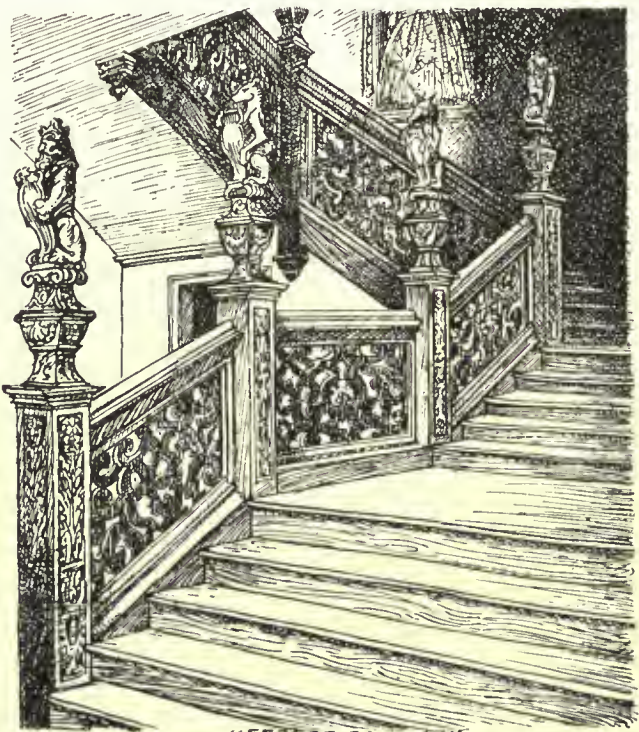


Plaster ceiling

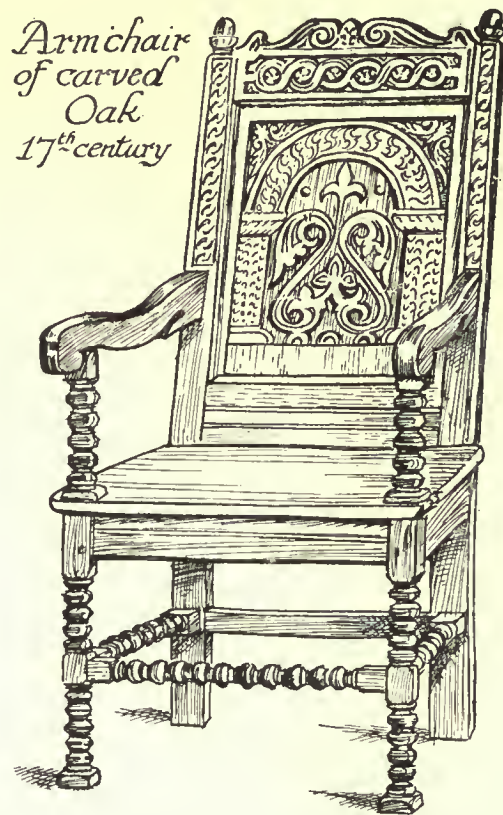
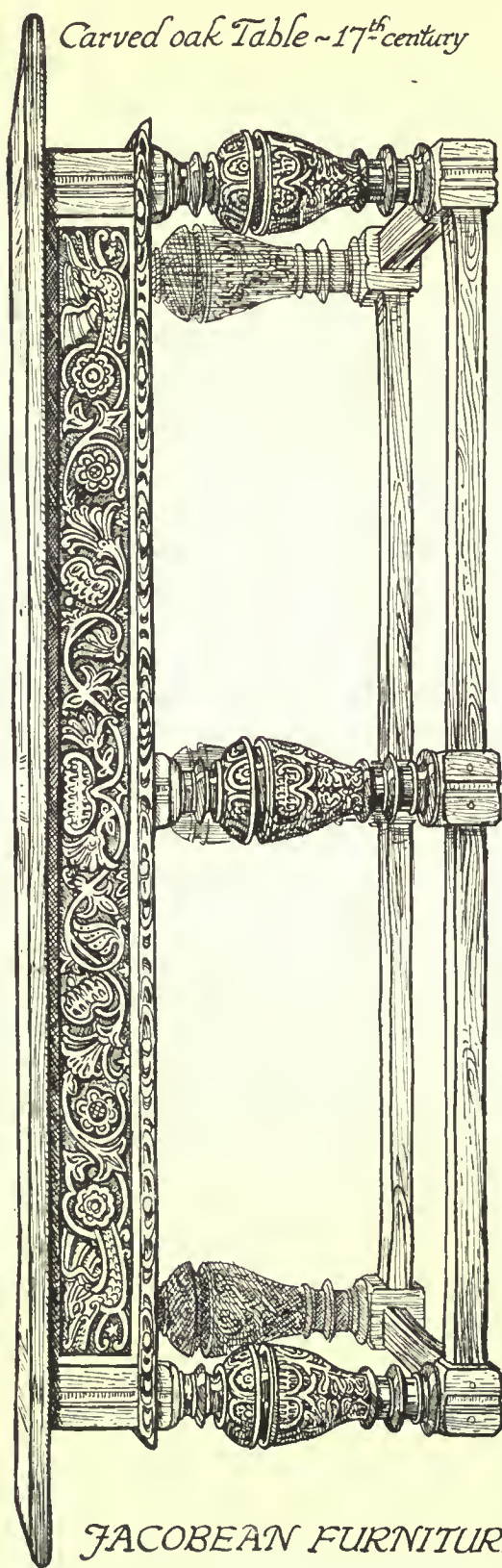
Jacobean-early 17th centy



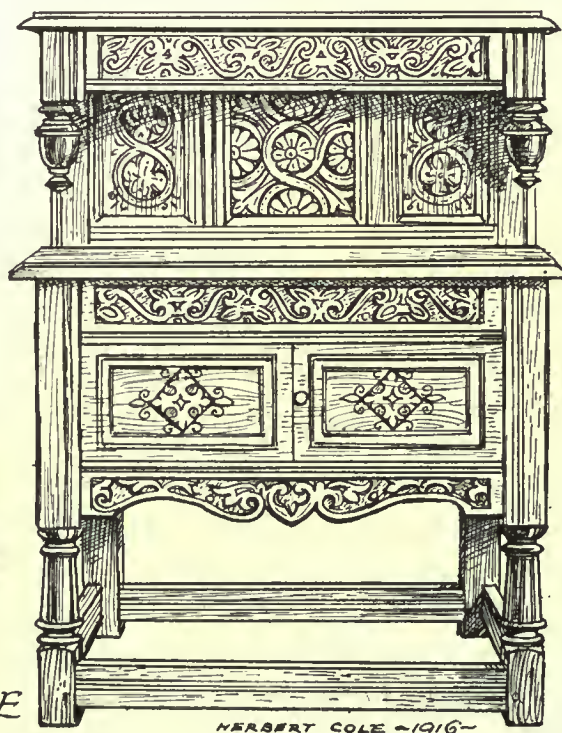
*Carved oak chair
1st half-17th centy*



Staircase ~
HERBERT COLE-1916-
Jacobean-



Carved oak Sideboard ~17th century



CHAPTER IV.

INIGO JONES.

In reviewing the Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean styles, we have noticed that all three were the outcome of Renaissance influence more or less properly understood by the English builders and craftsmen, and in the last chapter we had arrived at a point where pure and unadulterated Italian Renaissance architecture and decoration had come to stay.

For this state of things the great architect, Inigo Jones, born 1573, died 1652, was responsible. He studied in Italy under the direct tuition probably, under the direct influence certainly, of the great Italian masters. He may be considered, in our country at least, as a man before his time, for the Jacobean style continued in vogue for many years after some of his finest designs were executed. He is therefore a connecting link between the Jacobean style—"King James' Gothic," as it has been called—and the Christopher Wren, Queen Anne, and Georgian styles which followed after.

The authentic works of Inigo Jones are few in number. For one reason he was loyally attached to the cause of King Charles the First, and the period of disturbance produced by the Civil War was a bad one for art of all kinds, neither was the Puritanical spirit of Cromwell's day a likely incentive to artistic inspiration or activity. Consequently there was a lull in this time of transition, which is reflected in the severity of its furniture and decoration. But Inigo Jones, in his few finished buildings, and by the drawings and designs which he left behind him, had done sufficient to turn the stream in a new direction, and when the civil strife ended and the times became settled, it was to his work that his pupils and successors turned for guidance and suggestion.

Picturesque and full of character as the Elizabethan and Jacobean Styles undoubtedly were, we need not regret their disappearance, for out of the study of Italian architecture, brought to our shores by Inigo Jones, a new national school of architecture and decoration was developed, a style which in the main may be described by the words in which he expressed his own ideal, *i.e.*, that architecture should be "masculine, dignified and unaffected."

In previous chapters the five orders of architecture have been more than once mentioned, and as it is better to explain things too much rather than not explain them enough, some diagrams are given on p. 14 for reference and information.

The word "order" is used in architecture to denote the style of a building when that building is derived from Greek, Roman, or Renaissance sources. The characteristics of each order are contained in the particular kind of column and capital, with the accompanying bases, pedestals and entablatures.

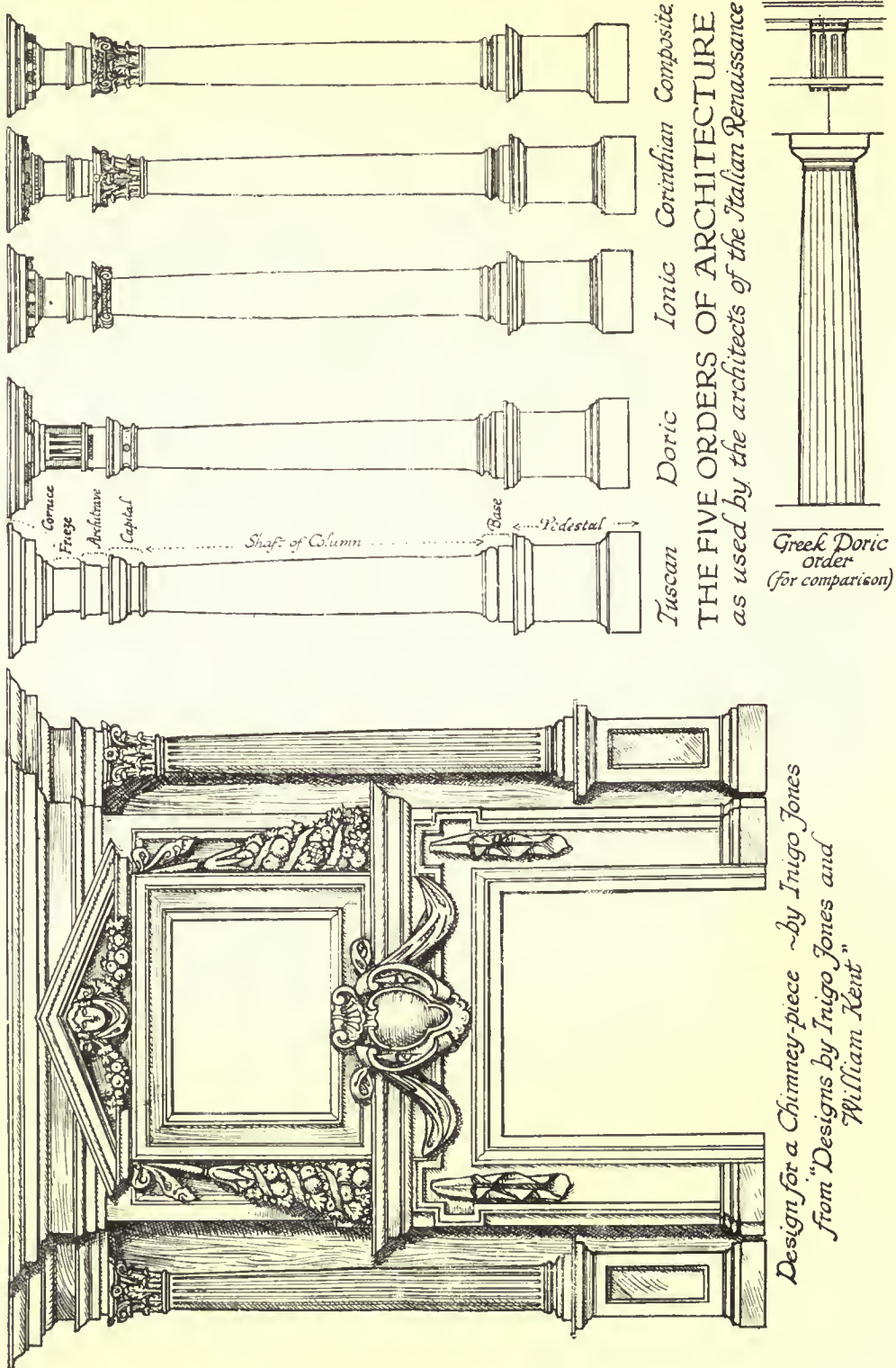
The Greeks invented three orders, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, and the Romans added two others, namely: Tuscan, a simplified version of Doric, and Composite, a combination of Ionic and Corinthian. The Renaissance architects in their study of ancient building, accepted, roughly speaking, the five orders as exemplified by the Romans in the ancient ruins of Italy, to which, of course, they had easy access, and many of which still exist. For the sake of comparison,

a Greek Doric column and entablature are shown on the same page. The shaft of this column had no base, but rested directly on the steps of the building. The flutings of the column were cut with sharp edges without a fillet or small flat space between them. The Romans altered the character of this particular order by adding base and pedestal, and if they did not invent the round arch they were the first to use it extensively, and by its common employment they enlarged the scope of building by making it possible to super-impose several tiers one above the other. This arched construction brought in the use of the pedestal under the column. The Renaissance architects, with whom we are most concerned, followed in the track of the Romans. They used the Tuscan and Doric orders in the lower parts of their buildings, and the Ionic, as being less severe, and the Corinthian, as possessed of more grace and elegance, in the upper portions. The Tuscan column was never fluted, but the other four kinds were used plain, fluted, or with flutings beginning part way up the shaft, leaving the lower portion plain, according to taste and the requirements of harmony or contrast in the design.

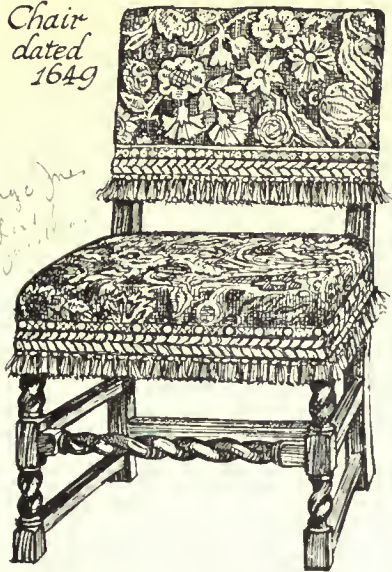
It will be noticed in the diagrams of the orders that the entablature, that is, the portion supported by the column and capital, is composed of three main parts; the lower part directly above the capital is called the architrave; the middle portion, the frieze; and the upper, or crowning part, the cornice. Sometimes the frieze is not flat, but has a slightly bulging surface or convex profile. It is then termed a "swelled" frieze. All these members could be enriched with sculptured ornaments, and it must not be supposed that the distinctive features of each order were always alike. Great variety was shown in the Ionic volutes, and their accompanying ornaments, and the acanthus leaves of the Corinthian and Composite capitals were sometimes sharp and pointed, at other times soft and rounded.

The slight curve outwards on the shaft of the column is called the "entasis," and is employed in order to prevent the columns looking hollow in the middle, an optical phenomenon which occurs when they are made with absolutely straight sides. This defect may be observed sometimes in the iron columns used in railway stations, and other utilitarian structures, where aesthetic niceties have not been regarded.

By comparing the diagrams of the five orders with the illustrations of Elizabethan and Jacobean work given in previous chapters, it will be seen how the craftsmen and builders of those times had only received a garbled version of architectural features, the true forms of which very few of them had ever seen. It was, therefore, well-nigh impossible for them to appreciate the careful thought and subtle beauty of harmony and proportion arrived at by the ancient architects, or the analysis and additional study of these refinements to which the great Italians of the Renaissance had given so much attention. The great fault of the Elizabethan and Jacobean buildings and decoration is the absence of a well-ordered simplicity; there is too great a riot of strangely mixed elements and too much ornament as a rule. On the other hand, the builders of these periods gave us much that



Chair
dated
1649



*Large fine
first
quality*

Embroidered Hanging - late 17th cent.

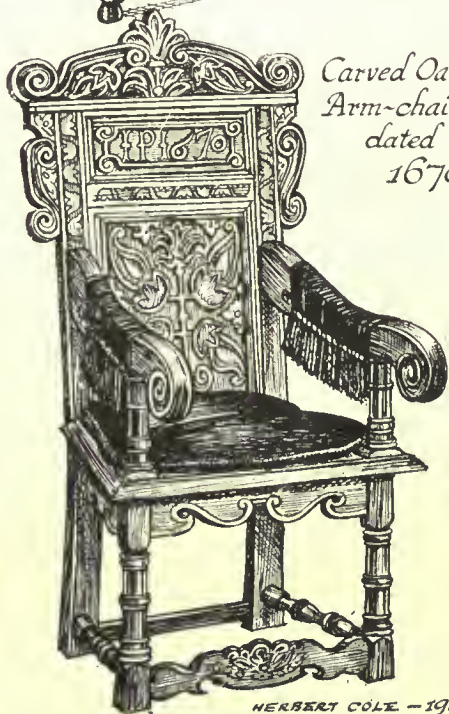


Arm-chair of carved
Walnut with cane
seat and back ~
Second half 17th cent.



Carved

Carved Oak
Arm-chair
dated
1670



HERBERT COLE - 1916 -

we should be sorry to lose, much that was national and interesting in character; but the change was bound to come sooner or later, and by good fortune the right man was there to direct it. For more than 150 years onwards the study of Italian Renaissance architecture, inaugurated by Inigo Jones, continued to influence our architects and decorative designers, and a wealth of stately and beautiful work was thereby produced.

The design for a chimney-piece, by Inigo Jones, adjoining the diagrams of the five orders, will give a good idea of their use in a piece of interior decoration. In this instance the columns are Corinthian, fluted; the panel in the overmantel was probably intended for a painting, and the decorative features of festoons, cartouche and draperies, are well proportioned, and their main lines designed with a masterly knowledge of effect. During the time in which the pure Italian style introduced by Inigo Jones was superseding the Jacobean, the furniture and accessories of the period were also undergoing a change, and the latter half of the seventeenth century is distinguished by a greater elegance and lightness in the forms of chairs, stools and couches. Cushions, embroidery, upholstery and cane-seating were employed to increase comfort and finish.

The chairs and tables of Cromwell's time were plain and solid, restraint and severity in furniture and decoration being the outcome of the Puritanical spirit which held art and beauty in low esteem then, as it has done ever since. When the restraints of Puritanism were removed, artistic invention revived, new departures were made, and with more settled times the craftsmen experimented with new forms.

The cane-back chair in our illustrations is a good example of this, and represents the style to which we were tending towards the end of the seventeenth century. Embroidered curtains executed in bold patterns in silk and wool, sometimes entirely in wool, are characteristic of this period, though they go by the name of "Jacobean" embroideries. The one illustrated is a typical example.

The colourings generally consist of schemes of dark and light greens, with brown stems and occasional touches of indigo blue and yellows, red tones being less frequently used. As a rule, they are fine pieces of design, much treasured by the amateur, and again show the influence of Eastern pattern, many of the forms being very similar to those on Chinese, Indian, or Persian textiles.



CHAPTER V.

THE LATER 17TH CENTURY.

In the latter end of the 17th century we have arrived at a time when the control of the architect over building and decoration became completely established. The woodcarver and plasterer no longer followed their own fancy. They gave way to the controlling architect, who became head designer, assuming sole responsibility for the final result.

Much dispute has arisen, especially in modern times, as to whether this was an improvement or otherwise. Probably the argument will never be quite settled. There are those who contend that the charm of unexpected beauties, resulting from the freedom of the craftsman can never be replaced by the later system under which he was obliged to carry out orders. There is a large amount of truth in this when viewed by itself, but in all the things of this world change and movement occur. New conditions evolve as fresh discoveries or inventions take place, and herein lies the moral. Only by constant watchfulness and constant application of commonsense principles to our work can we save ourselves from doing the wrong thing while carrying on the traditions bequeathed to us by our forerunners. They themselves were often guilty of neglecting these principles. Sometimes the freedom which the craftsman enjoyed ran into extravagance and license; he forgot to restrain his hand at the right moment, the result being an over-elaboration of fantastic detail. Occasionally, in later days, the architect in his zeal for correct proportions and outward impressiveness, in his worship of Italian masters, forgot the difference in climate and conditions between Italy and England, and gave little or no consideration to the comfort of his clients so long as he obtained the stately and symmetrical beauty of his models. The same faults in our own day are due to servile or unthinking imitation.

Thirty years ago or thereabouts our architects were much drawn to the study of those old farm-houses and country cottages which give so much beauty and picturesqueness to our rural landscape, and from which they developed the admirable designs for modern houses we know so well. Then came the speculative builder on the new track. Not knowing why or how the architect arrived at his results, he covered our suburban houses with false beams, grotesque porches, and unaccountable angle windows, Tudor in one part, Jacobean or Georgian in another.

Even an elementary knowledge of styles would save us from such incongruities. Freedom is a glorious thing, but without the guiding hand of knowledge it may lead to disaster. The wise course is therefore to study the traditions of the past and apply them to the requirements of the present with reasoning and intelligence.

The date of the Panelled Room in our illustration is about 1685. The Renaissance style inaugurated in England by Inigo Jones is here to be seen, consistent in every detail, yet there is a distinctly English look about it all. Oak was still a typically national material in those days, but a change will be noticed in the arrangement of the panelling. Instead of the small rectangular divisions of the wall space generally used in the Tudor and Jacobean periods we have projecting panels of large dimensions. One

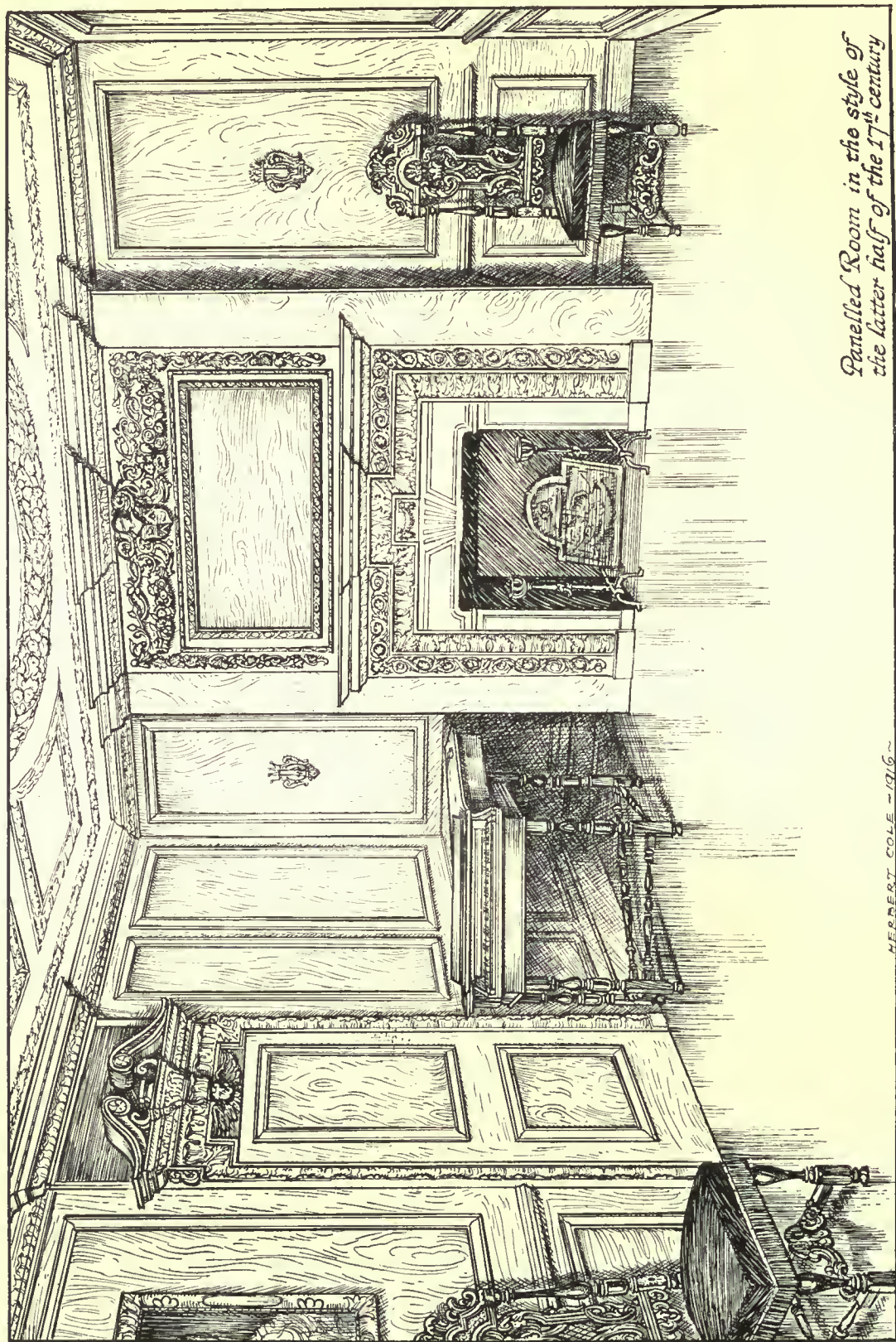
distinct advantage thus gained is the improved display of figured patterning produced by the grain of the wood. This in itself gives a great decorative beauty to the walls. There is a carved cornice running round the room, acanthus leaf and delicate bead ornament being the motives employed, but the central piece of decoration is the chimney piece and overmantel. This portion is richly adorned with applied carving in cedar, which gives a pleasing contrast of colour with the oak background. Probably the centre panel contained a painting of landscape, still life, or a hunting subject. Such pictures were specially painted for these spaces as they were also for "over-door" panels, and they formed pleasing centres of colour interest.

The little coat of arms above is also coloured, showing again how decorative an effect is obtained by a piece of heraldry if it be well designed and placed in the architectural composition. The surround of the fireplace opening is of white marble, which gives, with the dense black of the fireback, a strong and arresting note from which the eye returns to the restful golden browns of the figured oak. It is a rich, if sober, harmony, warm, cosy and homelike, and suitable, therefore, to our climate. In Italy the walls would have been marble or painted and gilded wood or plaster, but our architects, like Wren and the followers of Inigo Jones, while deriving their inspiration from Italy, used their brains in a logical manner by adapting their knowledge to our national materials. The door is also a richly decorated feature, but it is not allowed to compete in interest with the chimney piece.

The ceiling again shows a change. Instead of the narrow ribs intersecting in geometrical patterns with pendants and bosses, we see Italian Renaissance forms more frankly used. Garlands of fruit and flowers, laurel bands, supplemented with the conventional forms of egg and tongue, bead mouldings and similar ornaments are boldly modelled in strong relief. These will be seen more clearly defined in the detail drawing on p. 19.

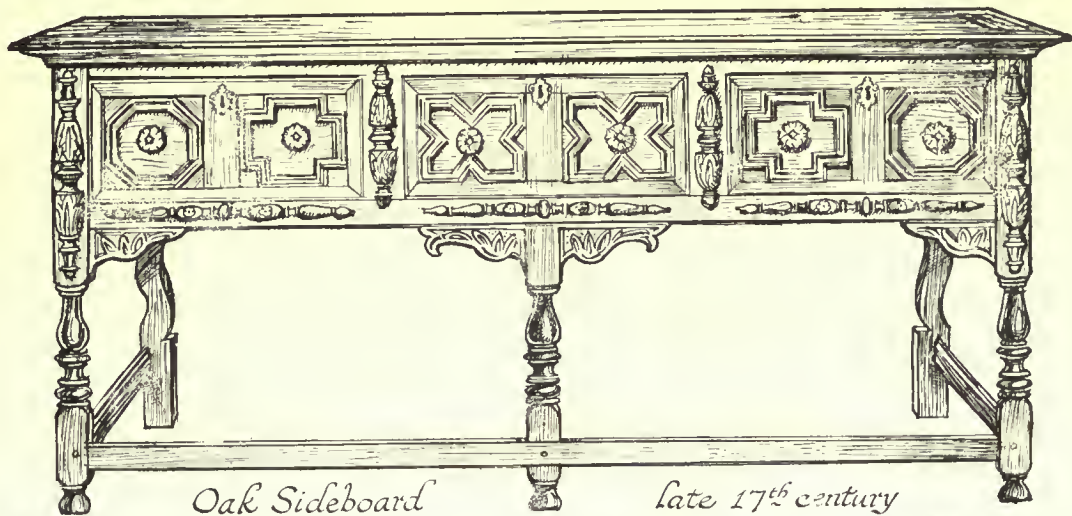
The silver candle sconces, the carved chairs upholstered in dark crimson velvet and the old portraits in carved gilt frames give finish to a satisfying scheme of warm and soothing colour. Truly a room good to live in, serviceable, friendly, and dignified.

In the furniture of the time, examples of which are given on p. 19, it will be noticed that workmanship is becoming more exact in finish, more accurate in structure. The cabinet maker has now taken the place of the joiner-craftsman who added wood carving to his trade as necessity arose for it, and who constituted himself the furniture maker of Tudor and Jacobean times. No slight to him is here intended; he did his work well according to the ideals of his time and with what interesting and admirable results we have seen in previous chapters. But manners, customs and methods of living had changed, and the furniture is a reflection of the age. Walnut was coming more into fashion about this time, and many fine pieces of carving in this material are still preserved for our admiration. The chair on p. 19 shows Italian and French influence in its florid and skilfully carved ornament.



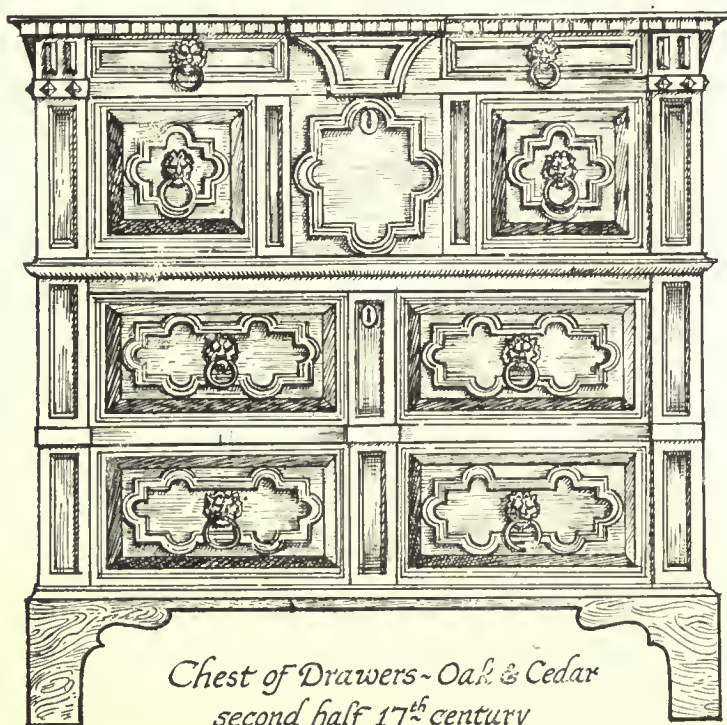
*Paneled Room in the style of
the latter half of the 17th century*

HERBERT COLE - 1916

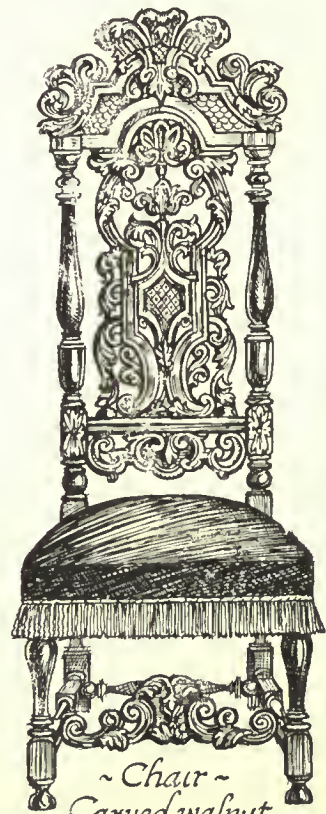


Oak Sideboard

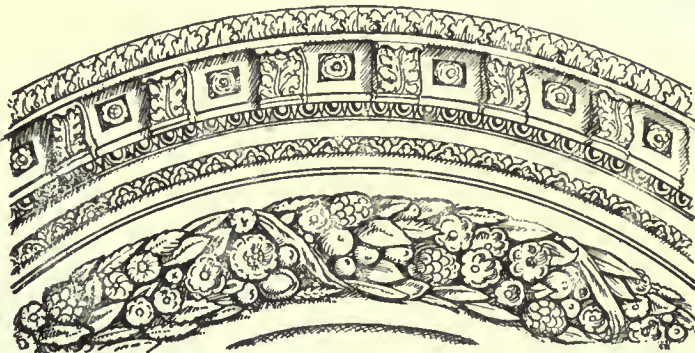
late 17th century



*Chest of Drawers - Oak & Cedar
second half 17th century*



*~ Chair ~
Carved walnut
late 17th centy*



*Detail - Plaster ceiling
second half 17th centy*

CHAPTER VI.

WREN AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

In the study of period styles we find furniture and interior architectural design so intimately connected that it is impossible to think of one without the other. Sometimes the same influences acted on both simultaneously. In both, again, we must remember that important feature, the overlapping of styles as in the progress of time one period merged into the next.

In the earlier part of the 17th century we have traced the influence of the Renaissance architecture and detail as it was rendered and adapted by Inigo Jones in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. For some years it was taken up and carried on by his pupil, John Webb, and other followers, and by the middle of the century it became, owing to their influence, so well established that the Jacobean style quietly died out. Webb was a very capable designer, but his work is heavier and less distinguished than that of his master.

The next great influence brought to bear on English architecture and decoration emanated from a very great man indeed, one of the greatest artists of all time—Sir Christopher Wren. He is known by almost every intelligent person as the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, but few outside professional circles realise the extent of his influence on domestic architecture and the home decoration of his day. He designed a substantial and comfortable house as well as he designed a church spire or cathedral, and many of the moderately-sized but stately red brick mansions with stone facings and beautiful doorways are traditionally assigned to him. He brought an eminently practical as well as artistic mind to bear on all the problems he had to solve, for he was a mathematician and a scientist before he became an architect, art and science being a necessary combination for success in architecture, by the way. One of the original members of the Royal Society, and a professor of astronomy at Gresham College, Oxford, he was the author of sundry inventions, all of which training developed his remarkable constructive faculty and helped to equip him for the study of architecture. He carried on the tradition of Inigo Jones, and his work is a continuation of that style so well described as "masculine, dignified, and unaffected."

About the same time as Wren established his reputation as an architect, the famous carver, Grinling Gibbons, arrived in England. He came from Holland, and brought with him the prevailing style of woodcarving as it was then being practised in that country. A marvellous technical skill had been cultivated there, and it might be said the word "impossible" in relation to woodcarving was unknown to the exponents of this school.

The most daring problems were attempted and accomplished with brilliant success. It is true that most of the carving of this character is almost like natural still-life painting in wood. Some critics would say it ought never to have been done, and with good reasons in support of their antagonism, for the fragile details of flower, feather, leaf or ribbon could be damaged by a careless touch.

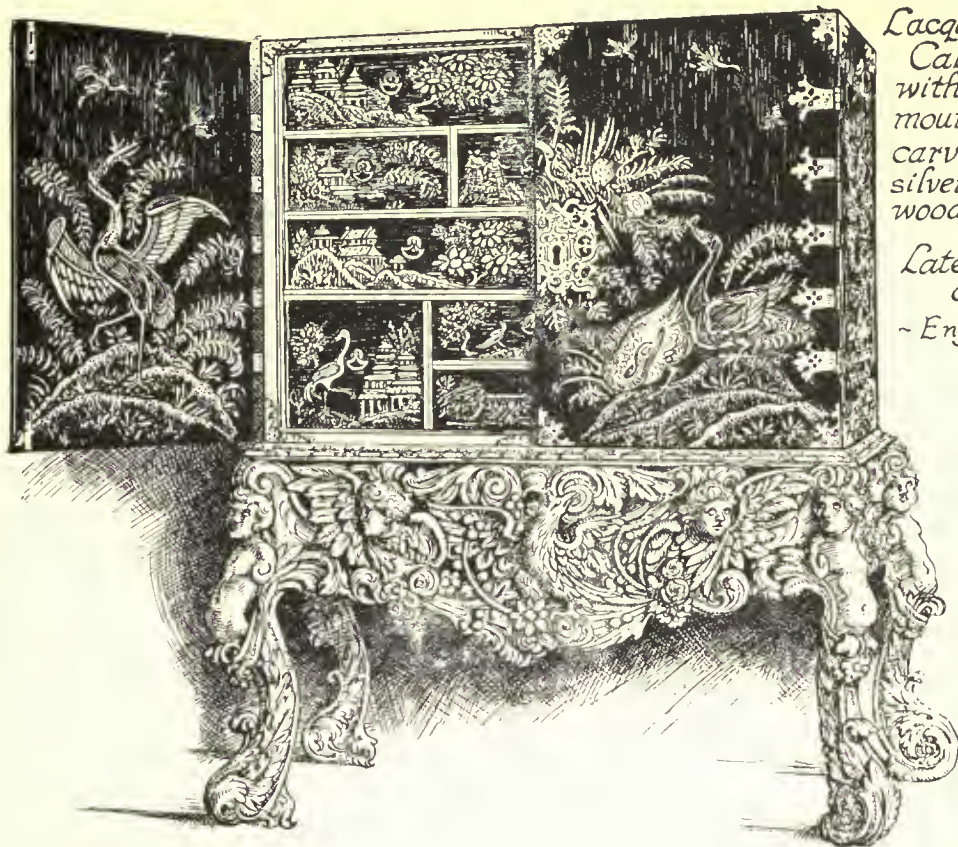
The designers of this period were intentionally

producing certain effects in decoration, and for these the applied carvings in question were employed. It would have been impossible to obtain the high relief, the rich and intricate light and shade of their decoration by carving direct on the panelling. The method followed, therefore, was to carve the ornament in softer and generally lighter-coloured wood and apply it to the surface when complete. Flowers, fruits, birds, both living and dead, garlands, shells, musical instruments, ribbons, draperies, in fact every conceivable object was brought in to play a part in this lavish and exuberant ornament. When all the objections of the critics have been met, and they are many and good, we have to admit, if we take decoration as a whole and possess a broad outlook, that the effect produced was a very sumptuous and splendid one, while the skill was so dazzling that it was no wonder it blinded the eyes of contemporaries to the grave faults of construction, and the treatment of material. But there it stands as an essential part of that particular historic style, and, like many other things which transgress strictly logical considerations, it possesses a fascination we cannot altogether resist.

Holland and its crafts exercised an influence on the decoration of our own country in other directions, marquetry, and lacquer work among others, and naturally this influence increased with the advent of William of Orange, when he came to the throne in 1689. Dutch marquetry became a fashion in the furniture of the time, especially on chests of drawers, table tops and clock-cases, or mirror frames. Stained or coloured woods were arranged in elaborate floral or geometrical designs as surface decoration on these objects. Sometimes metals, tortoiseshell or other materials were used for this purpose, the aim being richness or variety and quality of surface. In fact, colour and surface decoration had taken the place of carving to a large extent, though carving still held its place with and alongside of the other crafts.

The Dutch also took up the making of lacquer work. They copied it, no doubt, from the specimens they brought home in their trading with the East. Many of their pieces are close copies of Chinese work, just as they imitated very closely the textiles of India in their block-printed hangings.

English craftsmen also practised the art of lacquer work, and the cabinet on page 21 will give a good idea of the richness and beauty of these pieces of furniture. It is included because it is inseparable from the period, and we find about this time the beginning of that definite "Chinese taste," which made a strong impression on the decoration of the late 17th century, and part of the 18th, dying out after being carried to fantastic extravagance and bizarre experiments in the shape of alcoves designed as grottoes, mock temples, pagoda-topped doors, and such like incongruities. Nevertheless, some objects of great beauty were produced by the phase, which must be taken into account as it ran side by side with the quieter and more sober styles we associate with William and Mary, Queen Anne, and the early Georgian times.



Lacquered
Cabinet
with brass
mounts on
carved and
silvered
wooden stand

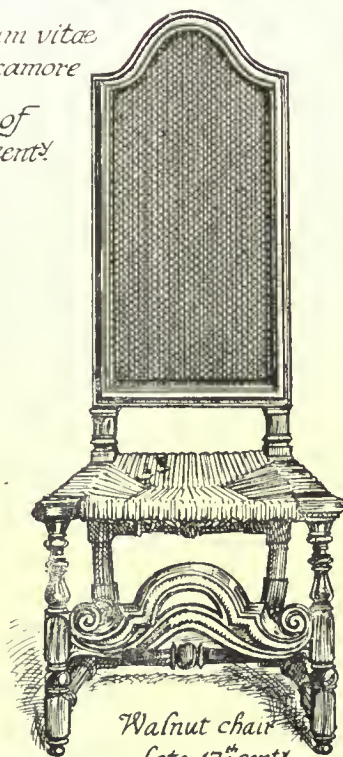
Late 17th
century
- English -

Chest of drawers ~ pine & oak, veneered with walnut,
lignum vitae
& sycamore

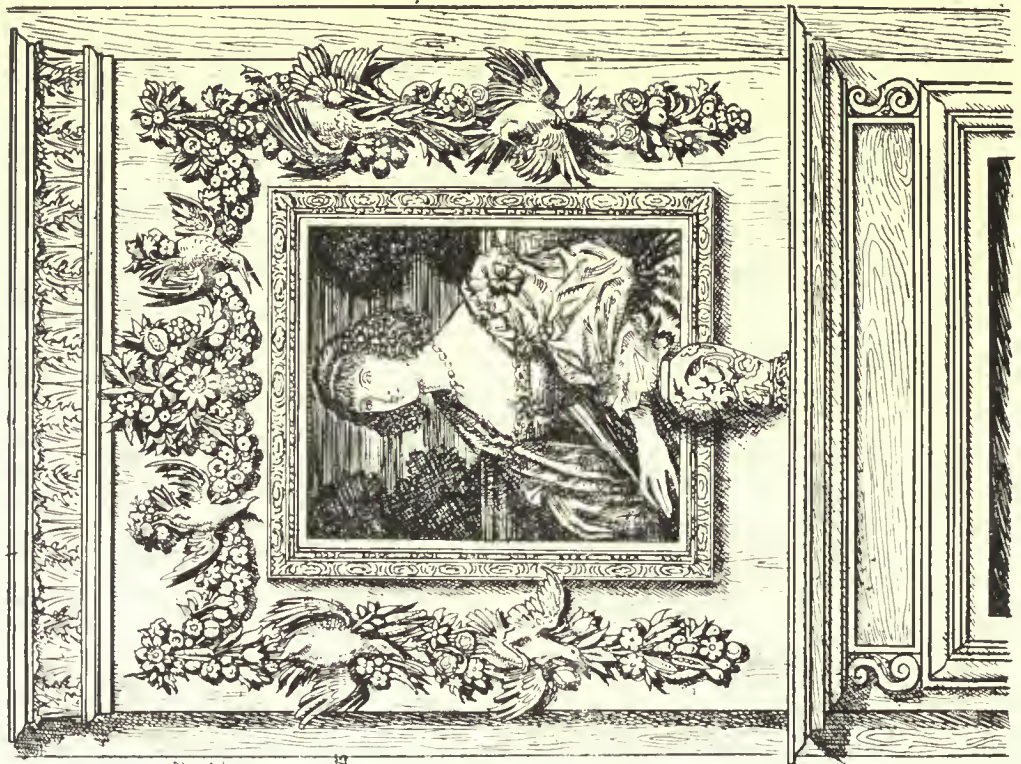


end of
17th cent.

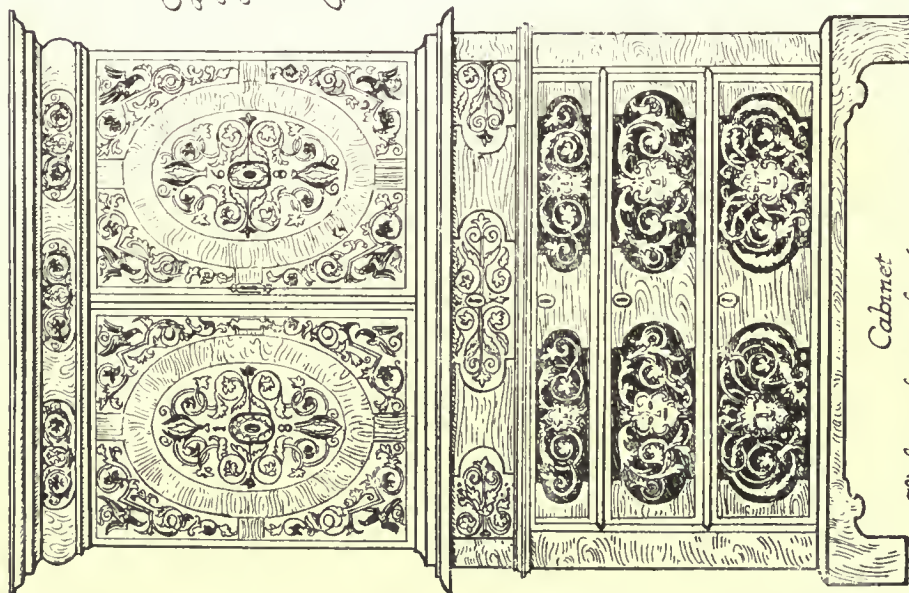
HERBERT COLE - 1916 -



Walnut chair
late 17th cent.



Chimney-piece
decoration in
applied wood-
carving ~
Style
of
Grinling Gibbons
late
17th centz



Cabinet
Walnut, decorated with marquetry,
dated 1688

HERBERT COLE ~ 1916 ~

The drawing of an overmantel decoration on page 22, is a characteristic example of the Grinling Gibbons' school of applied carved wood decoration. The mantel-piece in nearly every period is chosen as the principal feature to be decorated, and more than ever do we find at this time the designers and craftsmen lavish of their effort in order to produce a splendid effect.

Most frequently the carving enclosed and surrounded some Van Dyck or other ancestral portrait, but occasionally a classical landscape or decorative painting formed the central note of colour. From the Dutch again came those frankly decorative compositions of peacocks, domestic fowls, parrots and monkeys grouped with foliage, and vases of flowers or garden backgrounds which so often occupy these spaces or the panels over doors.

The lacquered cabinet is a fine specimen of that particular class of work, lacquer being a preparation of shellac dissolved in spirit and used as a coating

over the woodwork. There are two colours common to the 17th and 18th century craftsmen; black and red, the latter a very rich and brilliant tone, neither vermilion nor Venetian red exactly. With gilding and relief work and touches of other colour some splendid effects were produced. The cabinet here illustrated is black, with silver and gold, touched in places with faint green and blue. The walnut cabinet and chest of drawers are examples of chaste and severe design, combined with the art of surface decoration, obtained by marquetry, in rich arabesques in the one case, and by the symmetrically arranged "figure" or wood markings in the other. The chair on the same page is a somewhat plain specimen, but it shows the change from the heavily carved ornament of previous days to a different style. The high back, straight or slightly curved, was very prevalent during the reign of William III. These three pieces of furniture are quite characteristic of the period.



CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM AND MARY, AND ANNE.

While we trace the general characteristics of the William and Mary or early Georgian styles, we must allow for the difference between the palatial splendour of the great houses of the nobility, and the quieter, if no less solid comfort of the wealthy citizen class or the plain and useful furniture in the cottage or farmhouse.

Continuous, and side by side with oak and cedar panelling, tapestries had been and were still employed as wall decorations, and an illustration of a room so treated is given on p. 25. Brussels still held a reputation for its tapestry weaving, and the Gobelin manufactory had been established in France in the middle of the 17th century, products from both these sources finding their way across to the great houses of our own country. Charles I. purchased the celebrated Raphael cartoons for the purpose of having them woven at Mortlake, and Oliver Cromwell, Puritan though he was, wisely purchased these designs for the nation after the fall of King Charles, and they now rest in South Kensington Museum. The character of these seventeenth and early eighteenth century tapestries is, of course, quite different from that of the older Flemish tapestries, with their more or less Gothic air of stiff draperies, and severe design. The later kinds are more "Frenchy," more pictorial and flamboyant, both in colour and composition. They were part and parcel of the later Renaissance and accorded well with the palatial architecture and painted ceilings which had become the vogue. It was an age of classicism, and classical themes formed the subjects of both tapestries and paintings. Triumphs of Cæsars and Alexanders, apotheoses of gods, goddesses and heroes abounded on walls or ceilings, the characters marching in stately procession through magnificently decorative landscapes on the one, or flying through ethereal blue vaults and bestriding billowy cloud-forms in pomp and dignity on the other. Italian and French artists, like Verrio and Laguerre, were employed on these painted decorations by Charles II. and William III., followed by Sir James Thornhill in the 18th century.

Dutch and Flemish artists supplied the lesser panel paintings over mantel pieces and doors, their subjects being chosen generally from bird and animal life, with flower painting and landscape background accompaniments. Frans Snyders, Melchior Hondecoeter and Jan Weenix are names usually associated with this type of work, an example of which may be seen in the over-door panel in our illustration. Occasionally these were varied with "landscips" and marine pictures, in which were depicted stately ships and barges; so it will be seen that there is a great variety of decoration to generalise from, and to condense into a style when we consider the different phases of this period. Some experts in the history of furniture have divided the periods into three main groups or generalisations; the Age of Oak, the Age of Walnut, and the Age of Mahogany, and it is a convenient arrangement as a rough guide. Most of the permanent and substantial furniture of this country up to the Restoration of Charles II. was of oak. Then, owing to various reasons, the national tree became scarcer. Ship-building, as commerce increased, demanded more of this wood, and no doubt the forests became more

depleted as the population grew larger. Oak paneling and wainscoting began to be less frequently seen than formerly, and walnut made its appearance as a fashionable material for furniture. The reign of William and Mary and perhaps that of Queen Anne may be styled the age of walnut, while the Georgian periods which followed later come mainly under the title of the Age of Mahogany, as it was in the 18th century that this wood began to be extensively used. Its beautiful colour, surface, and fineness of grain gave the craftsmen their opportunity for exquisite workmanship and delicate finish.

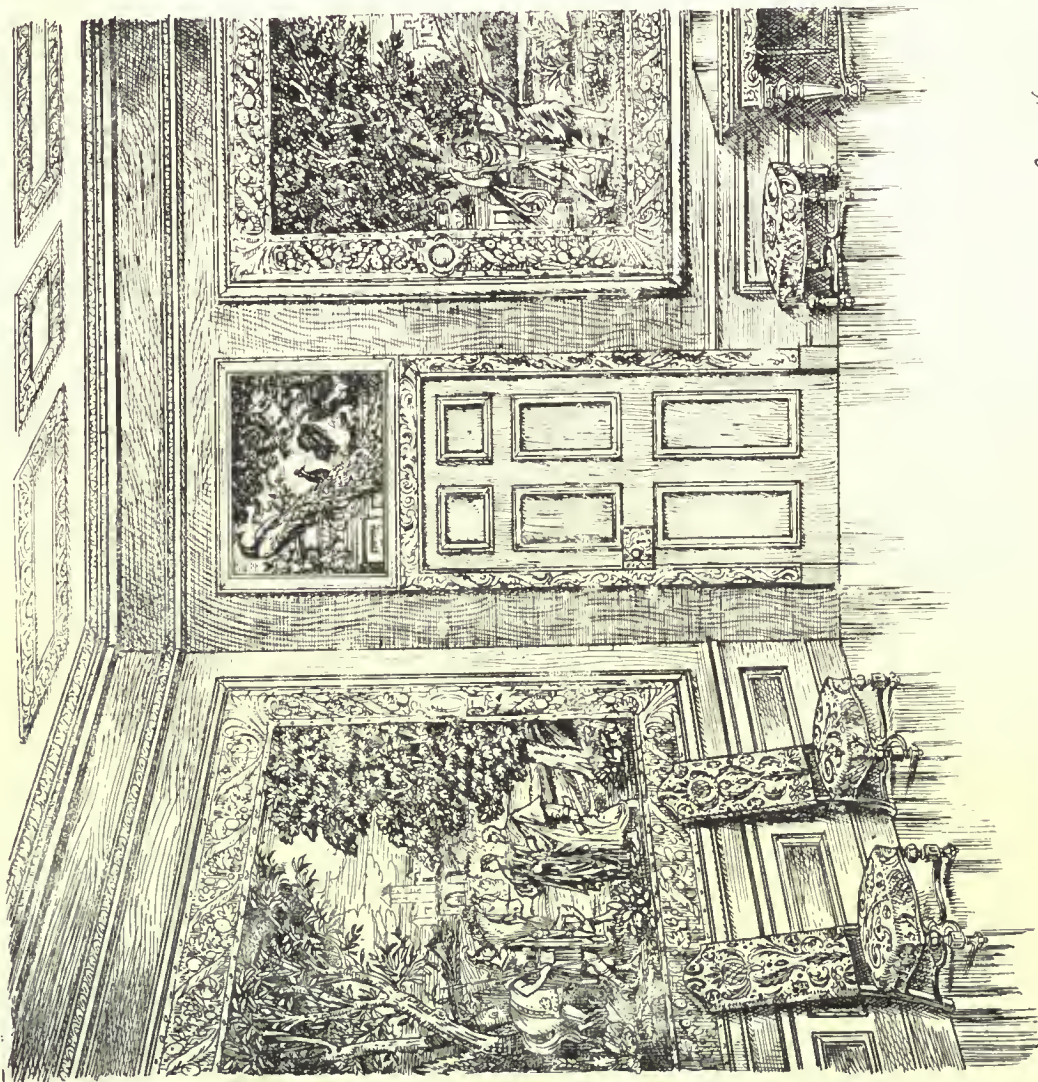
The shapes of chair backs and table and chair legs in the time of William III. and Anne begin to forecast the designs of Chippendale, who followed a little later, and who was undoubtedly one of the greatest of furniture designers and craftsmen. Two chairs in the illustrations on p. 26 show the type which was evolving at the time; their graceful lines and shapes of back and legs set a pattern in chair design which was followed closely for many years onwards. The third example shows that tapestry, upholstery, and the tall back still held place with the others. The clock case in marquetry is a very rich and elaborate piece of woodwork, and the little toilet glass gives us another example of the "Chinese taste." Besides tapestry, stamped leather, painted and gilded, had come into use during the 17th century. It arrived first from Spain, but its manufacture was taken up by the Flemish and the Dutch. The products of all these countries were imported into England. An illustration is given of a piece of the Spanish material on p. 25. The background is coloured in two tints, dark and light blue, most of the ornament gilded with diapered and punched surfaces, while the flowers are of varied colours. This is a very elaborate example, for some specimens show merely the brown tint of the leather with embossed pattern and lines or touches of gold here and there. This industry never really took root in England, but in modern times paper imitations have been manufactured. About the same time velvet brocades, patterned silks and damasks began to be used as material for covering walls and seatings. Chairs of this character are shown in the illustration of the tapestried room. Noblemen on travels and ambassadors at foreign courts sent home costly specimens of these textiles from Italy, France and Spain, and those who could not vie with their wealth sought imitations and substitutes. This led to the introduction of wallpapers, some of the first specimens coming from China. The period of William and Mary and that of Anne are remarkable for their varied aspects of decorative interest. Wallpapers, which had only been made in small squares were, by the invention of suitable machinery, manufactured in long strips at the beginning of the 18th century; the weaver, the ironsmith, and the locksmith, as well as the mason, the plasterer, the carver in wood or marble, and the cabinet maker, had all attained a high degree of skill and excellence in their various crafts, due to the sound training they had received in the School of Sir Christopher Wren and his fellow architects. A love of fine building and interior decoration was characteristic of the period, and to it we owe some of the finest specimens of our national arts.



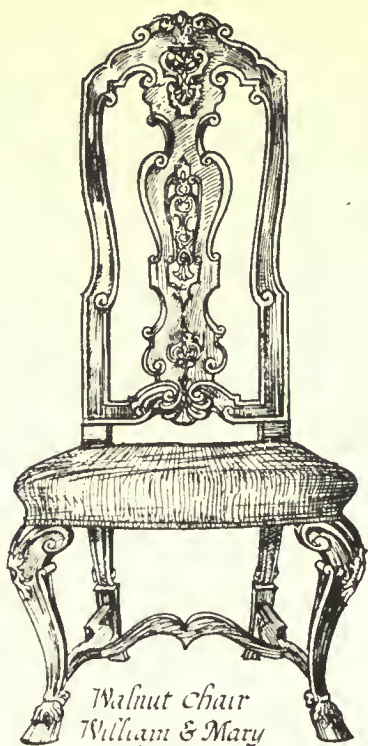
Spanish leather, stamped gilt & painted - 17th c.



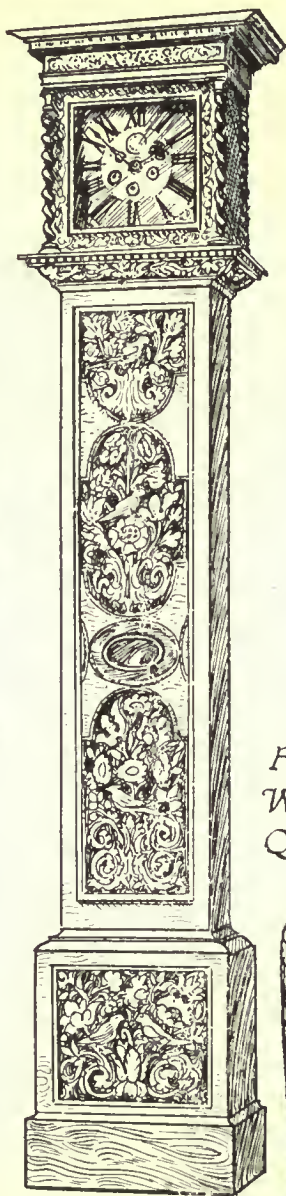
Fragment - Chinese wallpaper - late 17th c.



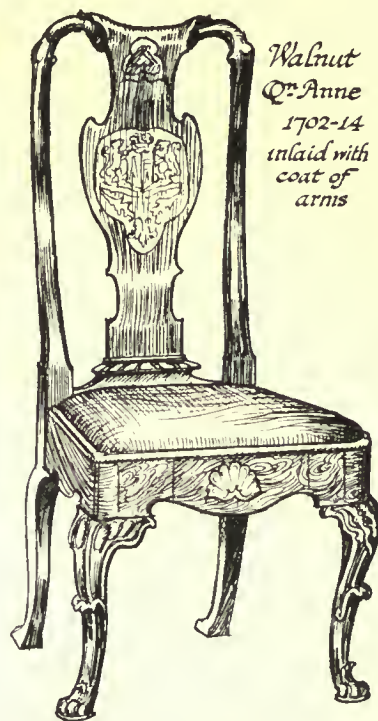
HERBERT COLE - 1916 - Tapestried room - time of William & Mary & early 18th centy



Walnut Chair
William & Mary
1689-1702

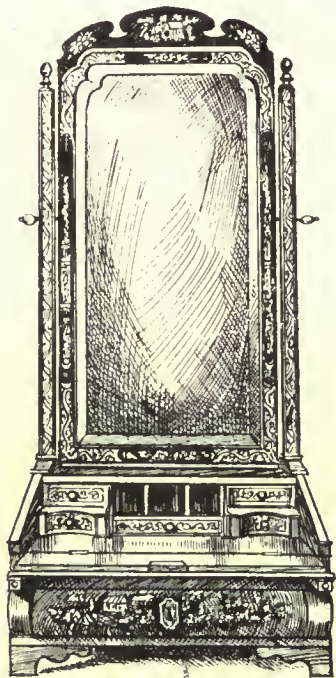


Clock in Marquetry case
late 17th centy.



Walnut
Q^{ueen} Anne
1702-14
inlaid with
coat of
arms

FURNITURE OF THE
WILLIAM and MARY and
QUEEN ANNE PERIODS



TOILET GLASS
of poplar, pine and oak with
blue and gold lacquer
English c.1700-



Chair
covered with
tapestry
late 17th cent.

HERBERT COLE - 1916-

Herbert Cole

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY GEORGIAN.

The two great pioneers of Renaissance Architecture in England, Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren, were succeeded by a number of very talented architects in the eighteenth century—James Gibbs, Nicholas Hawksmoor, and Henry Flitcroft may be mentioned as prominent men who left monuments of their skill in some of the most beautiful of London's Renaissance Churches, and many splendid mansions and great houses of the period are of their design. A sound, perhaps it would not be too much to say, a strict and severe training in all the knowledge of Italian architecture was the common course laid out for such men in their apprenticeship. Some of them visited Italy, where they enthusiastically studied, measured, and examined, and also made drawings of, the remains of classical buildings and the works of the great Italian masters of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.

Their rich and noble patrons also vied with them in the pursuit of architectural tastes and learning. Clubs like the "Dilettante" were formed for the express purpose of studying and debating upon antiquities and works of art as well as architecture.

Altogether the study of architecture and its attendant arts was "in the air"; from a fashion it became the rage, and, in spite of the extravagances and eccentricities of some of the devotees, it did an immense amount of good in cultivating the demand for a high standard of design and workmanship.

Consequently, we find in this, and the age which followed, up to the end of the 18th century, a very high state of excellent craftsmanship in carving and furniture making, and in lacquering, textiles, plaster ornament, and the lesser arts generally.

If we examine the mouldings and carved details of the rooms of this period, we find a grace and tenderness of execution, an exquisite feeling for form and beauty of detail which bespeak the pride and joy taken in his work by the eighteenth century craftsman.

The room illustrated on p. 28 is a case in point. It is adapted from a specimen in South Kensington Museum, where it is described as "in the style of James Gibbs." Elegance and refinement, both in proportion and execution, mark it as an unusually fine example of its period. All the details are carried out with the greatest artistic feeling, in fact, the more it is examined in part, the more one comes to think that design and execution could not be more harmoniously blended.

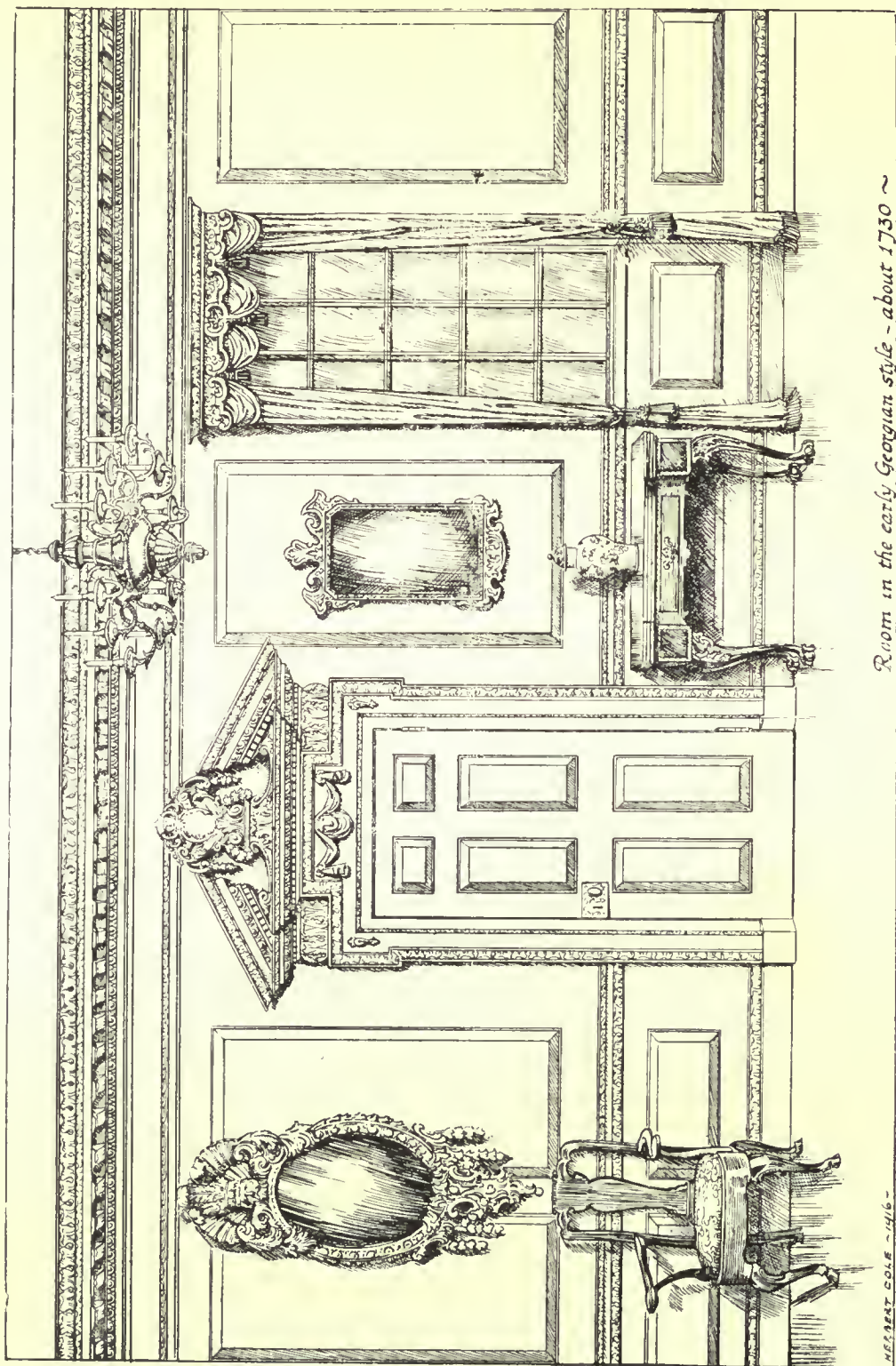
The woodwork, in this instance, is of pine, and it was originally painted, though, in its present state, with the paint removed, it is surely much more beautiful. When oak became scarce, at the end of the seventeenth century, it was customary to carry out the panelling of rooms in cheaper woods like pine, and they were generally painted. The commonest colour applied was olive, though sometimes white, cream, and other tints were employed. Gilding was also occasionally used on the woodwork in important details like capitals and flutings of columns or pilasters, moulded ornaments and similar accentuations of relief.

While endeavouring to keep these examples of period styles as distinct and orderly as possible, we must remember that there were, even in these days, conflicting tastes and fashions.

For instance, the Rococo style had been prevalent in France for many years, and some English connoisseurs had a fancy then, as now, for things in the French taste. The gold mirror-frame in our room illustration is an example of its influence. The glittering pomp and affected grandeur of the court of Louis XV. demanded the showy and superficial splendour which the tortuous curves, flowery garlands, and medley of shells, rock, ribbons and frills so readily produce in this style. Consequently we find it reflected every now and then in English work, though with us it always remained a side-path of ornament, an exotic, scarcely native, not quite acclimatised. It is evident, however, sometimes in the twist of a chair or table leg, sometimes in a bit of carved ornament, the decorated window cornice from which the curtains depend, and similar details.

The extravagances of the style are caricatured by Hogarth in that well-known picture of the "Marriage à la Mode" series, where the dissolute Earl sprawls on a chair in a grand saloon, and on the chimney-piece behind him, a clock-case formed of a most extraordinary combination of details, satirises Rococo work in its worst phases. Luckily, it played only an incidental part in our national periods, but these few words of explanation will account for the reasons why and where we find it. A touch of it comes in the shell-ornamented corners of the overmantel frame on p. 29, but in this case it is so slight and restrained that its objectionable qualities are absent. Let us not be unjust even to the Rococo style of ornament, for it cannot be denied that taken with the French costume of the time there was an artificial grace about its lightness and vivacity which is not without its own peculiar charm, but it was fortunate that it had but little influence on the more serious quality of English furniture and decoration of that day.

The overmantel just mentioned represents another characteristic piece of furniture of the period. Combinations of mirror and picture had quite a vogue. When no picture was present the gilt-framed mirrors were frequently divided across by partition lines, also in gold, and not always of rectangular shape; they sometimes took the lines of long palm branches, making decorative cartouche forms across the surface of the glass. Wreaths and festoons often divided the sheets of plate glass in the same fashion. A mirror of this kind may be seen at Kensington Palace. In our illustration the marine painting is soft in colour with tones of blue, grey, and green. Warm golden tints in the vessels bring the picture into harmony with the gold of the frame, while the decorated mouldings and silver tone of the mirror all contribute to a very pleasing effect. This is an article which might be revived with success in our own day if tastefully executed amid appropriate furnishing; in fact, many such schemes have been worked out in the decoration of modern hotels, clubs,



Room in the early Georgian style - about 1730 ~

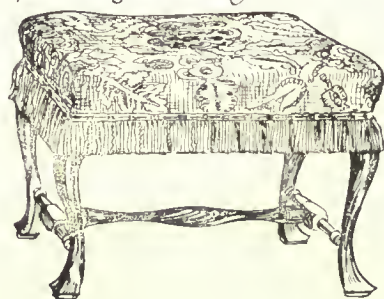
NEWMAN COLE - 1416 -



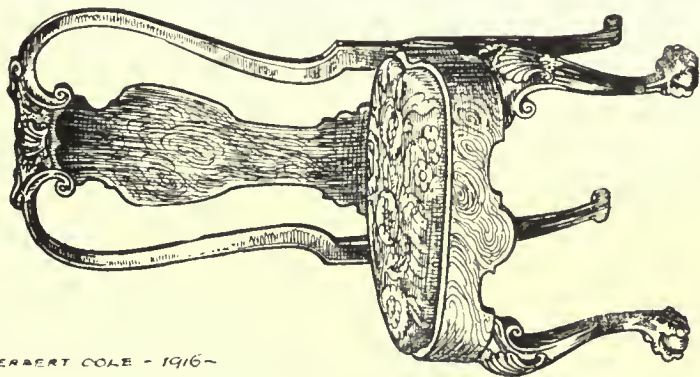
Walnut bureau cabinet, early 18th c



*Plate glass overmantel with painting
late 17th or early 18th centy*



*Stool, walnut with tapestry seat
Late 17th centy*



*Chair, carved walnut
tapestry seat early 18th c*

and the large ocean-going liners, showing the need of a sound knowledge of style to the modern decorator.

Walnut still continued to be used as a material for furniture well on into the 18th century, as the illustrations of bureau, chair and stool will show, but the chair and table in the room on p. 28 are of mahogany, which was now rapidly coming into fashion for the best and most highly finished work of the time.

Some of the chair backs remind one irresistibly of the beautiful lines and shapes made by the lovely curves of a violin.

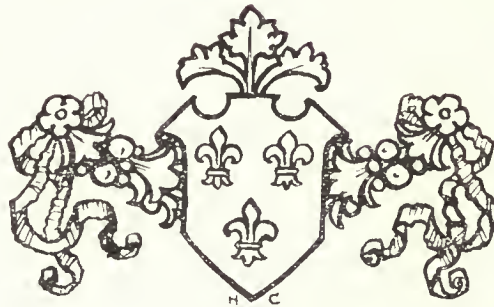
This is a great compliment to the cabinet-maker's love of subtle and beautiful form, for no more exquisite shapes were ever produced by handicraft than those evolved in the process of making stringed instruments of the violin type.

The bureau cabinet illustrated in this chapter is a fine example of good craftsmanship, and represents the high water mark of the age of walnut. Elegant in proportion, beautiful in line, reticent in ornament, the surface of the wood is given every chance to display its natural beauty. The doors of the upper

portion contain plate-glass mirrors, making, with the woodwork, a harmony of silver and gold.

Though in this period elegance and solidity were not divorced from each other, if there was a fault it was sometimes on the side of heaviness, but this cannot apply to the woodwork, the panelling or carved detail of the room on p. 28. Here all is so justly proportioned, so beautifully refined, and the ornamented and plain surfaces so exquisitely contrasted with each other that no one but a carping critic could wish an alteration. The beautiful brass candelabrum should also be noticed. The chandeliers, the wall sconces, locks, keys, and other metal accessories in this age were as carefully designed and executed as the woodwork and furniture of the time. Somehow, too, the old china, real china it was then, fitted in quite happily with the English work, as did also the English porcelain made under its influence. This brings to mind a saying of the late Lord Leighton, P.R.A., that "if you want a beautiful house, all you have to do is to put nothing ugly in it."

These beautiful 18th century interiors prove that if this is not the whole truth, it goes a long way towards reaching it.



CHAPTER IX.

MIDDLE GEORGIAN.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the style we generally associate with the term "Georgian" reached its highest point of all-round excellence in the matter of interior decoration, furniture design, and craftsmanship. The introduction of mahogany as a material for furniture in the earlier part of the century had led up to a still keener desire for refined and delicate workmanship; clever native designers and craftsmen, like Thomas Chippendale, had arisen, foreign influence was less felt, commerce had increased and money was more plentiful. Consequently we find an abundance of splendid work in the domestic arts, and some of the choicest specimens of the cabinet-maker's art, now so highly prized by the collector, were designed and wrought about this period. The middle Georgian period may be fixed about 1740 to 1760, for by the latter date the style had come under a new influence, that of Robert Adam, who brought from his studies in Italy a revival of ancient classical forms somewhat of the character of Pompeian decoration—but this we must study later.

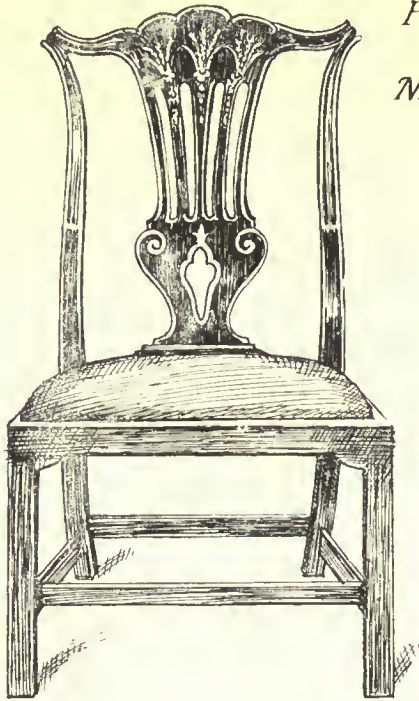
To revert once more to the earlier part of the century, and to take up the links in the historical chain of designers of interior decoration, the name of William Kent must be included. Born about 1684 (the exact year is uncertain) he began his career when a youth as a coach painter, but was later on patronised by the celebrated Lord Burlington, an amateur architect and enthusiast in all that related to the fine arts. Kent rose rapidly under this influential nobleman. He twice visited Italy, and became for many years the idol of the Court and the wealthy. He was consulted with regard to decoration of all kinds, from a palace to a picture frame, from a painted ceiling to a lady's ball dress. Opinions are divided as to his artistic merits. Some critics consider him to be an exponent of cheap grandeur and shallow magnificence, while others bestow high praise upon him and think he is much maligned and somewhat under-estimated. Certainly in his own day he was both extravagantly adored on the one hand and severely caricatured on the other. The truth, perhaps, lies in a middle course between the two. Some of his work has a largeness of style and conception which gives it distinction and impressiveness, while at other times he is either trivial or clumsy. The "Horse Guards" building in Whitehall is of his design, and at Kensington Palace some examples of his interior decoration may be seen. He attempted to excel in too many branches of design, and some were beyond his powers, for his painted ceilings compare but poorly as works of art with those of his predecessors. Much of his furniture design is of the massive and ostentatious carved and gilt style, marble-topped console tables, supported by Sphinx or eagle forms with outspread wings, cupids with festoons of fruit and foliage, or twists and curves of unrestful character. He died in 1748, so that his influence comes quite into the period we are now considering. All through the eighteenth century, side by side with the beautiful mahogany furniture now so much appreciated, we find the carved and gilt articles just mentioned.

They are characteristic of the "palace" rather than the "home," but it must not be forgotten that they are part of the period, and throughout the century gilt tables, mirror frames, overmantels, sconces, candelabra, all made of carved wood and gilded over, lend a contrasting richness and brightness to the tones of the walnut or mahogany furniture.

The name of Chippendale has become a household word, but it must not be supposed that everything associated with his name came from his hand, either as regards design or workmanship.

The examples of furniture given on p. 32 are broadly typical of his style, and the square-backed chairs here shown always remind us of his name. Settees made in the form of a double chair, but shorter than a couch or sofa, are common to this period, though they were first designed earlier in the century. There are, of course, authentic pieces of Chippendale's furniture in existence which enable us to appreciate the excellence of craftsmanship in both structural merit and beauty of carving for which his workshop was so justly celebrated. Little is known of his life; the date of his birth is a matter of conjecture, but he lived to be seventy or thereabouts. He came to London about 1727 with his father, who was a carver and gilder, took a shop in 1749, and published his well-known book called "The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director," in 1754. It will be readily understood that the appearance of a set of furniture designs published by a fashionable London cabinet maker had a wide influence all over the country. Local craftsmen copied and imitated the work of Chippendale more or less closely, adding their individual variations according to taste and demand. This book has been reprinted in recent times with facsimile reproductions, and anyone wishing to see Chippendale's designs can refer to it in most good libraries. Besides chairs, tables, cabinets, bookcases and all ordinary furniture, it contains numerous designs for many kinds of unusual objects, such as teapot stands, candlesticks, mirror frames, fire screens, card tables, wine coolers—all designed with great care, refinement, and taste. The various influences under which Chippendale worked from time to time may be seen as we turn over the pages of his book.

He sometimes wandered into the extravagances of the Rococo style or adopted the fantastic forms demanded by the fashion for things in the "Chinese taste," as it was then called. In the latter style he produced the borders of Chinese fretwork and eccentric key patterns which surround the edge of a table or perforate a chair back, the pagoda-shaped tops of bookcases and china cabinets and other details of the same character. The effect of some of these pieces is very light and graceful, and they make excellent and appropriate receptacles for the exhibition of fragile objects like china and porcelain, but it is his purely English work which is to-day most admired and sought after by the collector and the art lover. He also experimented with Gothic forms, and in his later period he introduced pointed arches into chair backs and the glazing of bookcase and cabinet doors. In the middle of



*FURNITURE
of the
Middle Georgian
Period*



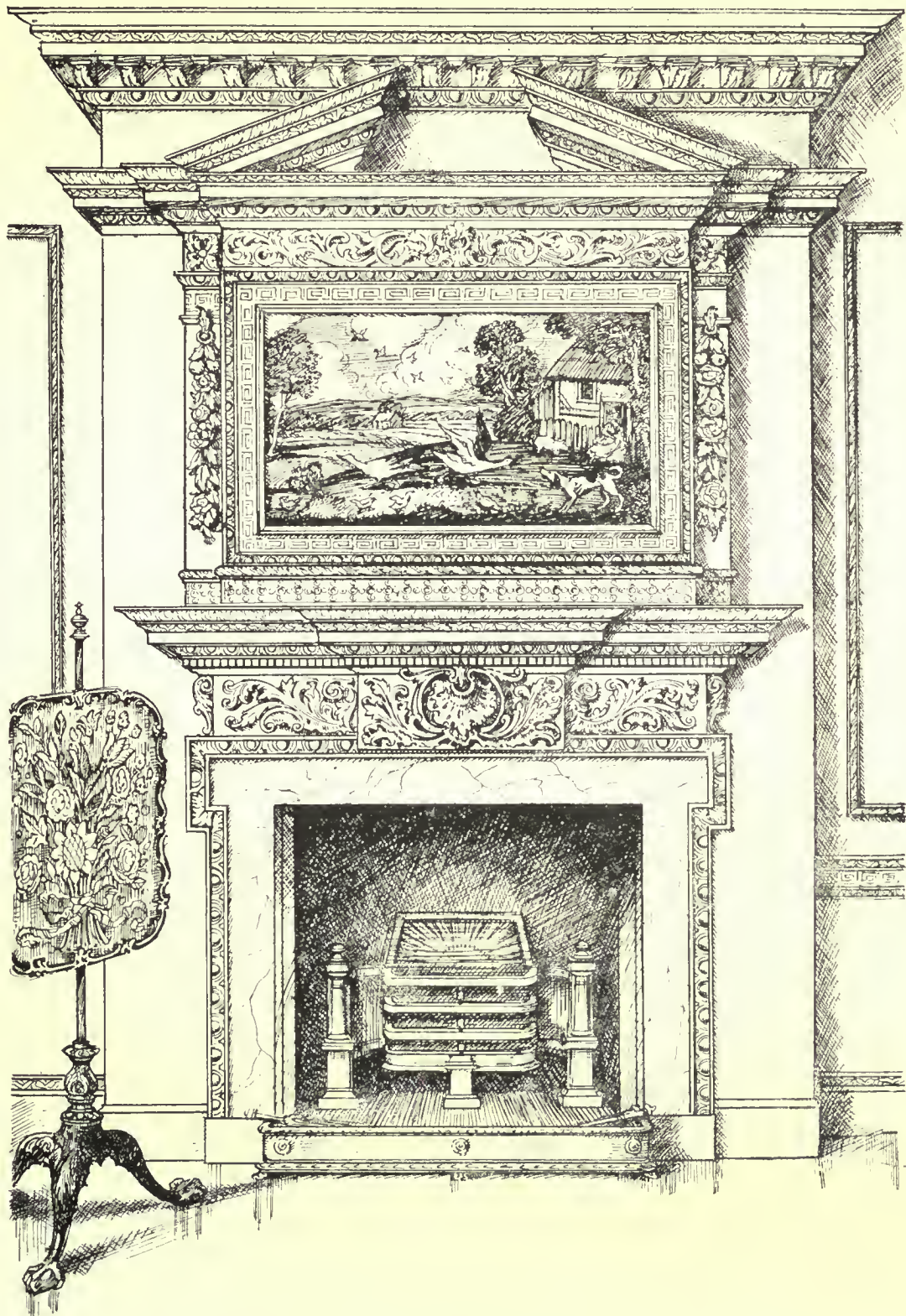
*- Chippendale chairs -
carved mahogany*



*Mirror ~ with mahogany
frame, carved & gilded ornament ~*



*Carved
Mahogany Table
Style of
Chippendale*



Portion of room - Middle Georgian style. about 1750-60

HERBERT COBE 1916

the 18th century a temporary interest in Gothic architecture was raised by a few amateurs, chief among them being the somewhat shallow and pedantic critic, Horace Walpole, and although Chippendale included in his stock patterns examples of the "Gothic taste," it died out under the influence of later designers like Adam, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite.

Chippendale's best pieces are refined and elegant in design, reticent and reasonable in the quantity of carved ornament employed, and finished with excellent craftsmanship, and it is owing largely to his talent that English eighteenth century furniture and decoration possesses a quality all its own and second to no phase of similar work produced on the Continent.

The portion of an interior represented on p. 33 is a typical example of middle eighteenth century work, and the accompanying page of examples of furniture will enable the reader to imagine the complete effect of a room of this period. Near the chimney-piece a fine screen is shown with an embroidered panel. The ladies of the time were extremely industrious with the needle. Chair covers, curtains, bed hangings, and other useful fabrics were ornamented with floral design by their skilful fingers in a charming decorative taste. Altogether the period strikes us in looking backward as one of richness and warmth of effect combined with an air of generous comfort, while qualities of daintiness and elegant taste are equally evident.



CHAPTER X.

ROBERT AND JAMES ADAM.

Towards the end of the 18th century certain changes began to appear in the style of English architecture and interior decoration. Up to this period there had been an unbroken sequence of fine design carried on in stages of consistent growth for over one hundred years. Before entering upon the study of the changes which occurred towards the end of the 18th century, the name of Sir William Chambers may be mentioned as almost the last of the great and distinguished architects who followed the tradition of Inigo Jones and Sir Christopher Wren. His best known work is Somerset House, on the Thames Embankment, which is undoubtedly one of the finest buildings in London. The same style of chaste and dignified design pervades his work for interior decoration, specimens of which are still to be seen in other places apart from Somerset House.

The men who brought about the marked changes towards the latter end of the century were the brothers Robert and James Adam, the originators of the "Adam" style in architecture and interior decoration. By some distinguished authorities in our own day these men are considered as the leaders of a decline, but granting this to be so, their work is so excellent when compared with that which followed closely after their time, that we look upon it with admiration, and treasure what remains of it, either in furniture and fittings, or in the exterior and interior design of the old houses which are now distinguished by their name.

Robert Adam, the chief influence and leading spirit, was born in 1728, and came from Edinburgh. He travelled in Italy, where he studied and measured the ancient buildings, and afterwards founded a style of decoration built upon his studies, which is now known by his name. Upon his return to England he began to practise as an architect, and designed several large houses for titled and wealthy patrons in different parts of the country. Towards 1770 he acquired a large London vogue, and besides his buildings in the Adelphi many of the houses in the older London squares are close imitations of his style if not actually from his designs. He died in 1792. His motto was "Lightness, Grace and Elegance," and he had a very high estimate of his own abilities, for he considered the work of his predecessors to be lacking in these qualities, and to be ponderous and somewhat uninteresting in comparison with his own.

The brothers Adam are credited with the invention of a fine kind of plaster stucco. Pressed into metal moulds while hot, it could be used to produce very thin and delicate forms, which were applied to ceilings and walls and also to woodwork and furniture.

Instead of the boldly carved foliage or modelled plaster in strong relief which had been prevalent up to their time, they now aimed at dividing up their surfaces with compartments in the shapes of circles, ovals, squares, diamonds, or segmental spaces, and they decorated these shapes with small figures of a cameo-like character, fans, urns, sphinxes, delicate wreaths and festoons of leaves, rosettes and beads. Greek and Roman ornaments of all kinds were brought into these compositions. Honeysuckle and acanthus foliage festooned or tied with ribbons, all of a very

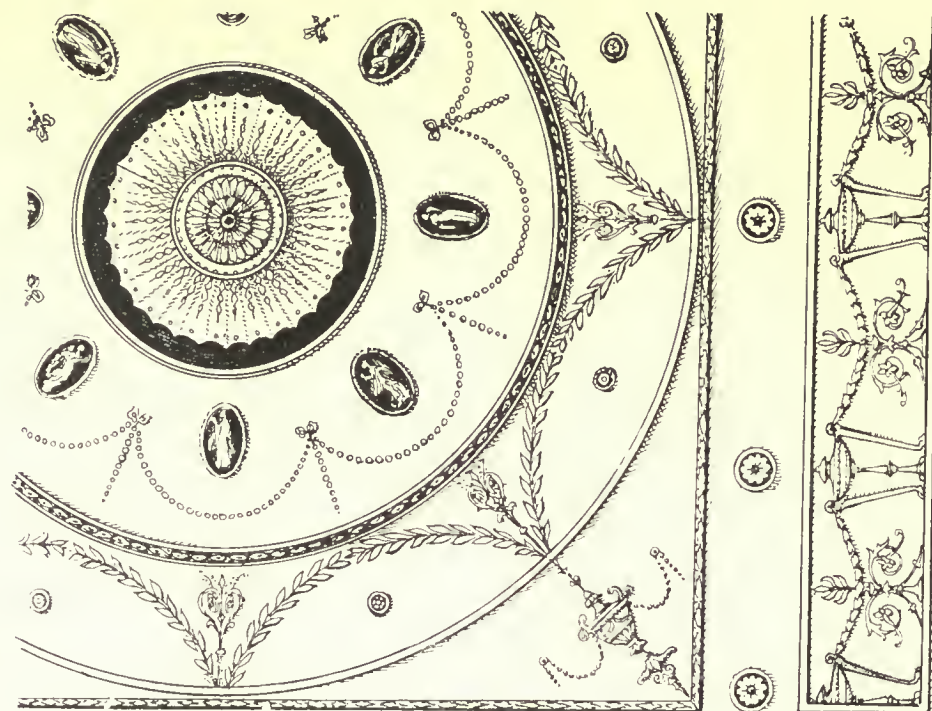
light and graceful character, were made to play a part in their so-called novel and superior style. The detail drawing on p. 36 shows a piece of a ceiling of this kind. Italian workmen were employed in making these stucco ornaments, which, when applied to the walls or ceilings, were judiciously tinted in light tones of green, pink, or blue, in order to diminish the glare of the white plaster and harmonise the ceiling with the tones of the walls, hangings and furniture. The principal panels in their ceilings were often painted with mythological subjects by Angelica Kauffman, Antonio Zucchi, and other artists. Some of these decorations are still to be seen in London houses and public buildings.

The interior on p. 36 gives a good idea of the effect in room decoration resulting from the principles practised by the brothers Adam. The panel on the chimney breast is of plaster, the mantel-piece of white and coloured marble. The Adams designed many beautiful mantel-pieces, and the one in our illustration is a characteristic example of their style. Chaste and severe, yet graceful and charming, it compels admiration by its beauty of proportion and delicately carved surfaces. Wedgwood and Flaxman also flourished about this time, and their beautiful cameo plaques and panels are sometimes found inserted as decorations, in place of carved sculpture, into these beautiful mantel-pieces. The fire grates and fenders were objects upon which the Adams also expended their skill as designers, and they also supplied the cabinet makers of their day with designs for chairs, sideboards, bookcase fittings, and many other details of interior decoration. Those fine old doorways with the graceful semi-circular fanlights, the well-proportioned panels and carefully designed mouldings which we admire to-day perhaps more than ever they were admired before, are associated with their name. There was a strong flavour of the speculative builder about these celebrated brother architects, but in their plainest house fronts they never neglected beauty of proportion in their doors and windows, and in their quite ordinary interiors well-moulded cornices and mantelpieces are to be found.

Their influence on contemporary decoration was extensive, to say the least, and suggestions of it reappear to-day in the work of modern architects and designers.

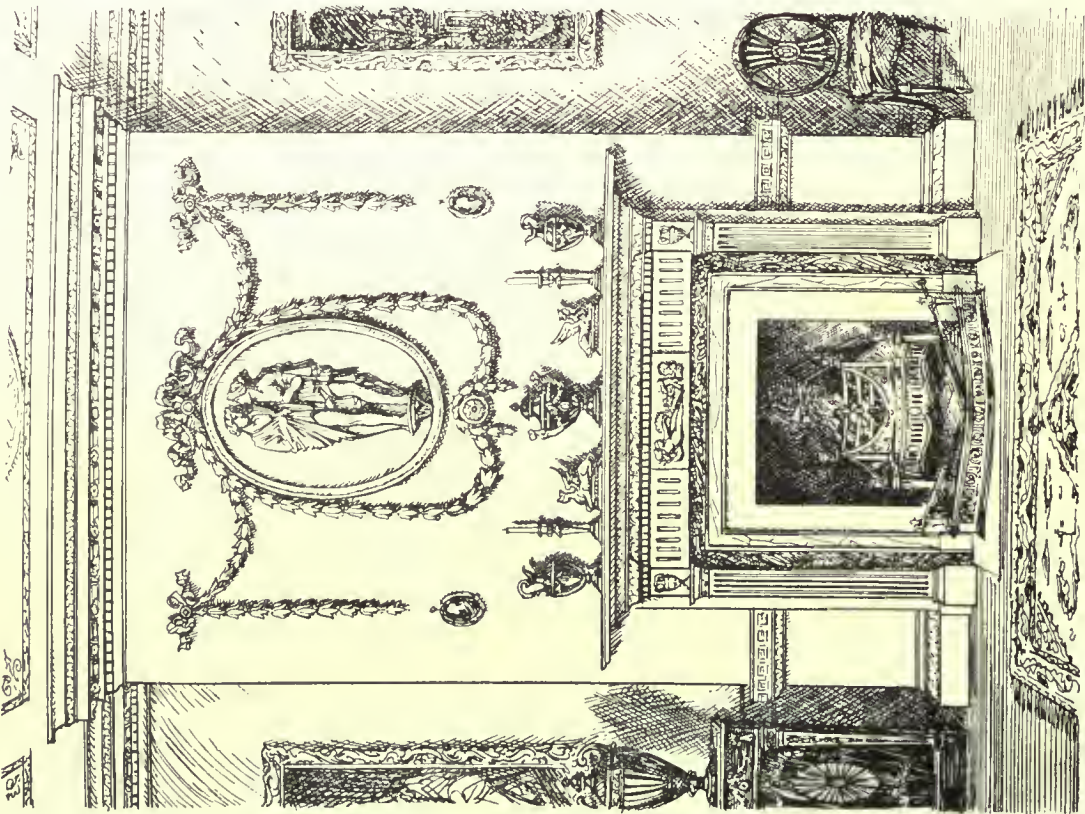
Perhaps at no period was the combination of architecture, furniture, and decoration more felicitous than when Adam, Wedgwood, Flaxman, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite were leading the style or working harmoniously together.

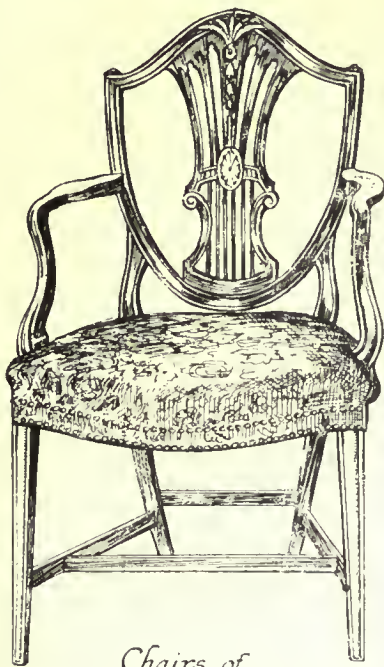
In this latter part of the 18th century the treatment of the staircase also underwent a change. The massively-carved woodwork, newel posts and balusters gave place generally to wrought or cast iron substitutes. The winding stair became more common, and in combination with a mahogany hand rail, the stairs and landings were guarded by scrolled or foliated ironwork, often of very elegant and elaborate design. The furniture on p. 37 supplies the necessary detail of the room of the period, but of the designers of this beautiful woodwork we must speak in the next chapter.



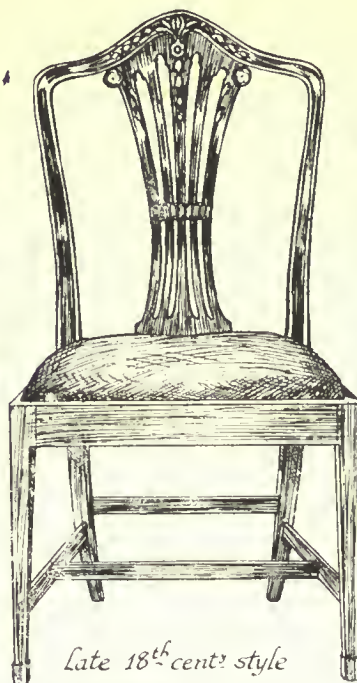
Portion of room and detail of ceiling in the style of Robert Adam ~ late 18th century ~

HERBERT COLE. 1916.





Chairs of

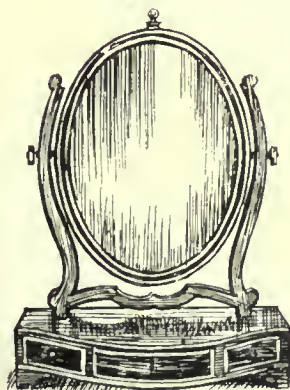


Late 18th cent^y style

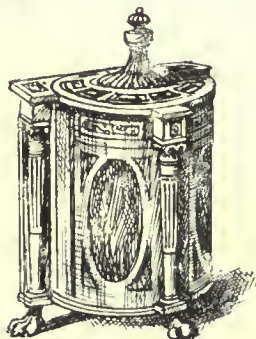


*Table
Carved Mahogany
Style of
Robert Adam
Late 18th cent^y*

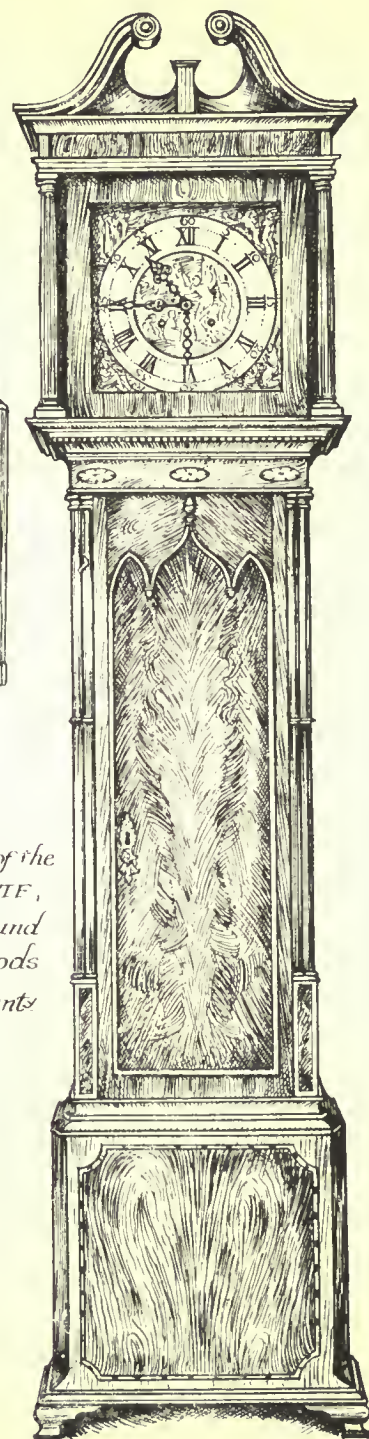
*FURNITURE of the
HEPPLEWHITE,
SHERATON and
ADAM Periods
Late 18th cent^y*



Toilet Glass late 18 c.



*Sheraton Knife-box
Inlaid Mahogany*



*Clock-case
Inlaid Mahogany
Sheraton Period
Late 18th
cent^y*

HERBERT COLE-1916-

CHAPTER XI.

THE LATE 18TH CENTURY.

The two great cabinet makers of the latter part of the 18th century, Sheraton and Hepplewhite, following the example of Chippendale, published books of their designs and specimens. Both these publications appeared in 1794, but their work and influence did not commence at that date. They would naturally publish what they had accomplished after having previously made a reputation in their craft.

Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite each have groups of admirers, who claim first place for their particular favourite, but the truth is that each one of these three great craftsmen is so supreme in his special qualities that the honours are generally divided equally among them. Chippendale relied mostly on carving for his decoration, Sheraton on inlay; and Hepplewhite is a link between the two.

Sheraton's work is distinguished by grace of line, refinement of decoration, and logical construction. The structural members of his pieces of furniture are seldom or never hidden by tortuous curves; supports and joints are frankly designed for their purposes, and his applied decoration never trespasses over the borders of utility. Most people recognise a Sheraton piece by the satinwood inlay, and it is to a large extent a distinguishing mark of his style. He had a preference for straight lines and flattened curves in his structural parts, his carving was low in relief and consisted of rosettes, ribbons, flutings, acanthus and small bell flowers. His inlay patterns consisted of such centralising motives as ovals or fan shapes, circles with radiating lines, leaf and festoon forms, and in borders, simple lines, narrow or broad, sometimes varied by chequer-work, as in the chair back shown in the illustrations.

Occasionally his central panels are further embellished by paintings, small figure, landscape, or flower subjects skilfully executed and highly finished by decorative painters who made a speciality of this type of work. These pieces are interesting historically, but tend to become illogical and inappropriate when considered from the utilitarian aspect. A table should certainly fulfil its purpose; moveable things are constantly placed upon it, and highly finished paintings upon its surface are far more likely to suffer from rubbing and scratches than carving or inlay. Hepplewhite's furniture approaches the style of Robert Adam more nearly than that of his two great rivals, Sheraton and Chippendale. His chairs are generally known by the oval or shield-shape backs shown in our last chapter, and his ornament stands between the florid richness of Chippendale and the delicacy and severity of Sheraton. He also used the classical details so much in favour at that time for decoration. Urns, vases, acanthus leaf, ribbons, and festoons of pendant flowers are the notes upon which he played. Taperings and flutings of chair and table legs were most carefully designed and delicately executed, and if the ornaments used by Hepplewhite and Sheraton are restricted to very conventional limits, it must also be admitted that they fitted into the style of the period, and that vulgarity

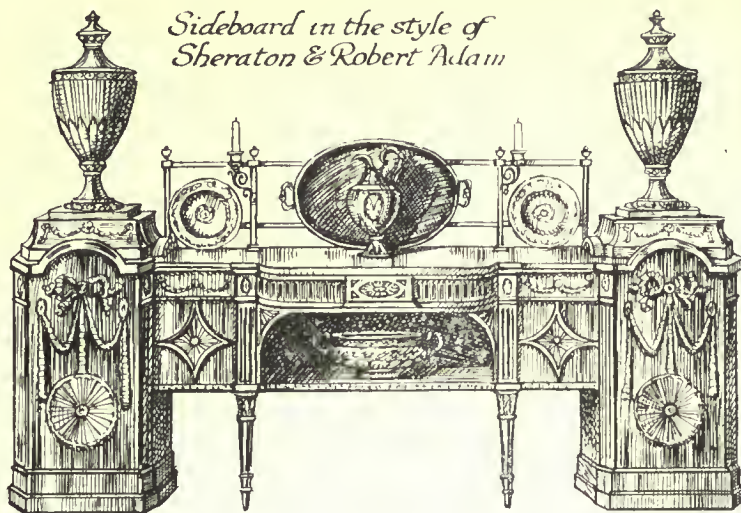
and thoughtless design or craftsmanship are entirely absent from their work.

Sheraton lived on into the early years of the nineteenth century, 1804 being the date of his death. The inventor of a new style himself, he lived to see a change which superseded, and partly grew out of, his own. The overlapping of styles in the different periods of decoration has been noticed before, and the times which we are now reviewing are no exception to the rule. Some of Chippendale's pieces approach the severity of Adam and Hepplewhite; theirs, with those of Sheraton again, merge into that style called "Empire," which was scarcely English, being borrowed in the main from France. The lyre-backed chair of Sheraton style at the head of p. 40 is an example of this tendency, and the same may be said of the gilt and painted table and the chair in white and gold. The first of these three pieces has stout brass wires let into the lyre to represent the strings of that instrument, and they repeat the motive under the arms at the side. The binding edge, usually upholsterer's gimp, is also made of brass wire, coiled scroll-wise. Though the chair is beautiful in shape and craftsmanship, it comes perilously near the class of work where objects are used to decorate other objects, instead of decoration being frankly what it should be—ornament only. There is no need for the back of a chair to be anything but a chair back; it need not be a lyre or a harp or anything but itself. Sheraton, in spite of his usual good taste, perpetrated a few monstrosities, a noted example being a chair he designed for Nelson, the various parts of which were composed of ropes, anchors, spars and other nautical objects.

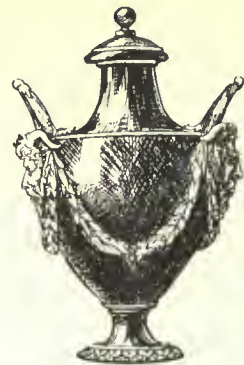
The other lyre-back chair, on p. 40, in white and gold, about 1800, is a similar example, and it is not redeemed by such beauty of form as the Sheraton specimen which contains the same leading motive. The black and gold chair, however, is graceful in form and line, and its decoration is quiet and unobtrusive.

These examples all show something of the change of style which was taking place towards the beginning of the 19th century. French furniture designers had been in the habit for many years of using metal inlay or mounts, and the fashion began to appear in this country, though it was never used to anything like the same extent.

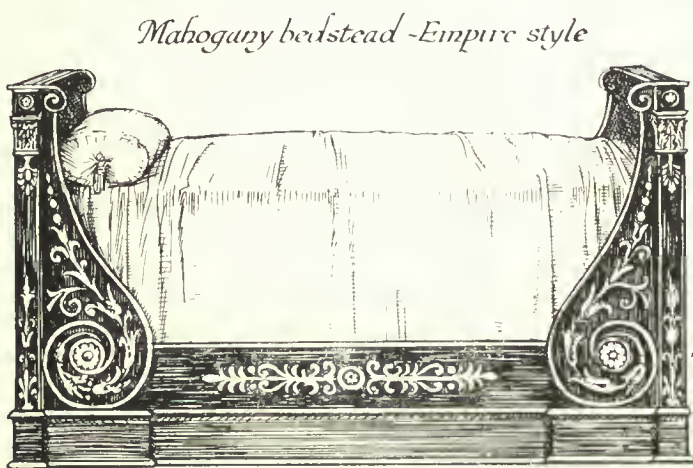
Some examples are given in the illustrations to this chapter of the decorative objects designed by Wedgwood and Flaxman. Josiah Wedgwood, the great Staffordshire potter, occupies an honoured place in the list of 18th century designers and craftsmen. From small and tentative beginnings he so improved his ceramic products by both scientific method and artistic skill that he became famous in all European countries and in the American States. He shared the fashionable love of classical form and detail of which the brothers Adam were the prominent leaders, and he had not only the good taste but the practical business acumen to employ good artists and modellers in order that the



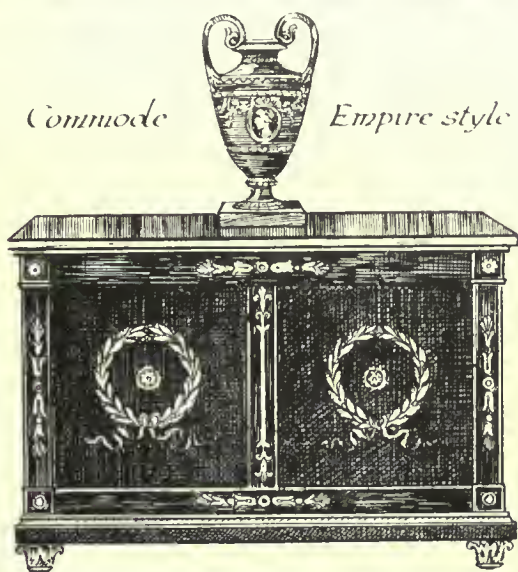
*Sideboard in the style of
Sheraton & Robert Adam*



*Wedgwood
Ornaments*



Mahogany bedstead - Empire style



Commode Empire style



Flaxman Wedgwood Plaque

LATE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY FURNITURE



Two chairs of
Sheraton style

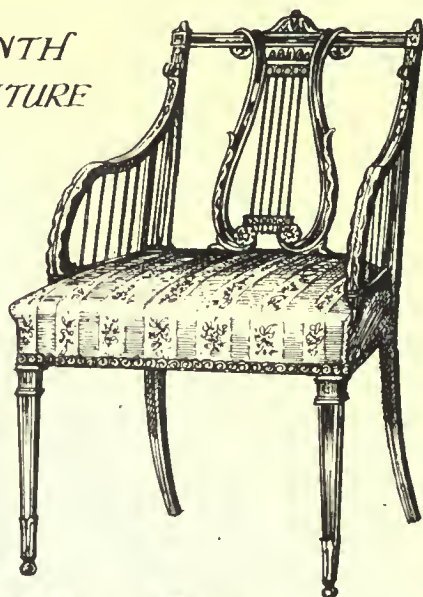
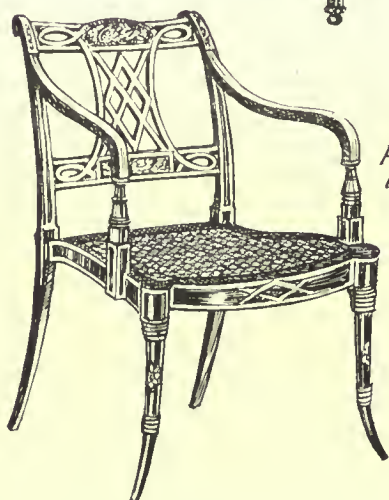
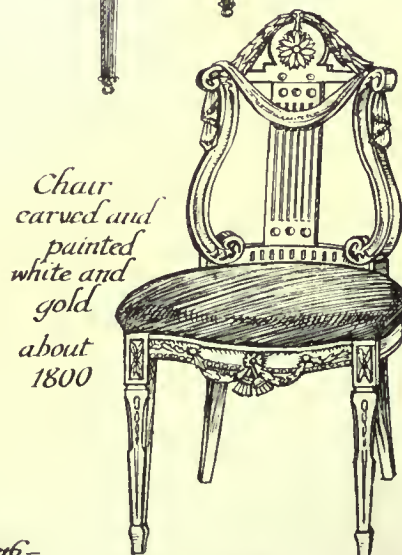


Table with painted
and gilded ornament
about 1790



Chair
painted in
black & gold
about 1800



Chair
carved and
painted
white and
gold
about
1800

quality of his products might be of the very best. For many years he employed Flaxman to supply him with modelled plaques, cameos, portraits and medallions, which could be used by themselves or set into interior decoration as panels for mantelpieces and furniture. Flaxman lived in Rome for about seven years, and while studying the antique for his own purposes as a sculptor, he supplied copies or adaptations of ancient bas-reliefs to Wedgwood in England. Flaxman, in fact, directed a workshop-studio, where several assistants were employed to provide Wedgwood with material for his manufactures. They derived mutual help from each other, and it says much for the culture of the times that a partnership of this kind had also an appreciative public.

A chaste and noble beauty of line and form pervades Flaxman's works, and the delicate colours of the pale blue, or green and white jasper ware of Wedgwood's invention suited his designs in the most admirable manner. Wedgwood died in 1795, but Flaxman, his junior by many years, lived on till 1826.

A few examples of Empire furniture are given in this chapter, but as panelling and room decoration in England from 1800 to 1830, or thereabouts, were merely a repetition of eighteenth century styles, more or less tinged with French influence, I have not included any specimens.

From the time of the French Revolution and the rise of Buonaparte, the feeling for classical forms had been growing continually stronger in France. Napoleon considered himself as a re-incarnation of the great spirits of antiquity, Alexander, Cæsar, and Hannibal, his courtiers and flatterers took the same line of thought, and the consequence was a revival of all the proud pomp of classical times in the design of interior decoration and furniture during his reign. This soon assumed the air of cold severity and austere grandeur which we now designate the "Empire" style.

It spread to England in the declining years of the 18th century, and the beginning of the 19th, and remnants of it are visible in the early Victorian period. As it died out there set in a ghastly downfall, in which structural design and fitness in decorative detail became divorced from each other; a period which serves no purpose but that of a bad example, and from the continuance of which we were rescued by William Morris and other great modern designers. This brings us up to the work of our own day, with which the present volume is not concerned.

NOTE.—Modern reprints have been made of Sheraton's and Hepplewhite's specimen books with facsimile reproductions of the engravings.



CHAPTER XII.

THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE.

This book has dealt, so far, with English styles exclusively. We come now to the French styles, which, from the decorator's point of view, are second in importance only to those of our own country.

The influence of French styles has been more or less continuous on our own decoration since the time of Louis XIV. Many of our great houses and historic buildings contain rooms decorated in definite imitation of French work. Chippendale and the other great designers of the eighteenth century came under its influence, and the modern decorator is sometimes called away from his routine work to the restoration or re-decoration of a theatre, hotel, or large mansion of the kind just mentioned, and in such cases more than a superficial knowledge of the work is necessary for its satisfactory accomplishment.

With this brief introduction, we may begin our study of the French styles with a slight historical sketch of the periods which are suitable to our purpose.

It will be necessary, first of all, to cast our minds back to mediæval or Gothic times, as we did when reviewing the English styles. The same state of things prevailed in France as in England before that great change of thought, born in Italy, and known as the Renaissance, or *re-birth* of classical knowledge, impressed itself on the buildings of France and their interior decoration. The architecture of the times, as also in our own country, had the character either of the Church or the fortress—nay, the two were often blended, and the church, the castle, the guildhall or dwelling house had each the pointed arch, the loop-hole or lancet window, the battlemented parapet, and the massive oak door studded with huge nails, or protected by bars and scrolls of wrought iron.

A change followed, and the dwelling-house became less of a fortress and more of a palace or mansion, built for pleasure and comfort rather than for defence. In England this change occurred as the pure Gothic forms began to mingle with those of the Renaissance, about the time of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., and the result we now term the Tudor style was the first of the "modern" periods as distinguished from "Gothic."

A similar retrospective plan must be followed in considering French decoration, and the reigns of the kings are a convenient, if incomplete, way of dividing the periods. Francis I., it will be remembered, was the French monarch who met Henry VIII. on the famous "Field of the Cloth of Gold," and although the Renaissance in France began somewhat before his reign, he was mainly responsible for the spread of its influence.

Like other prominent characters of those times, he possessed good and evil qualities in sharply divided contrast. Loose in morals, guilty of bigotry and religious persecution, he was, on the other hand, the patron of arts and learning. In the decoration of Fontainebleau and his other palaces, he employed Italian painters, sculptors, and architects. He brought the painters, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Il Rosso and Primaticcio, and the sculptor-goldsmith, Benvenuto Cellini, from Italy to his court, and paid them lavishly in both money and

honours. He founded the College of France, the first really secular school where sciences, languages and law could be studied without priestly intervention. His campaigns in Italy had brought him into touch with Italian culture, and under such a passionate lover of the arts and learning it can be readily imagined what a great impetus was given to building and decoration in France during his reign.

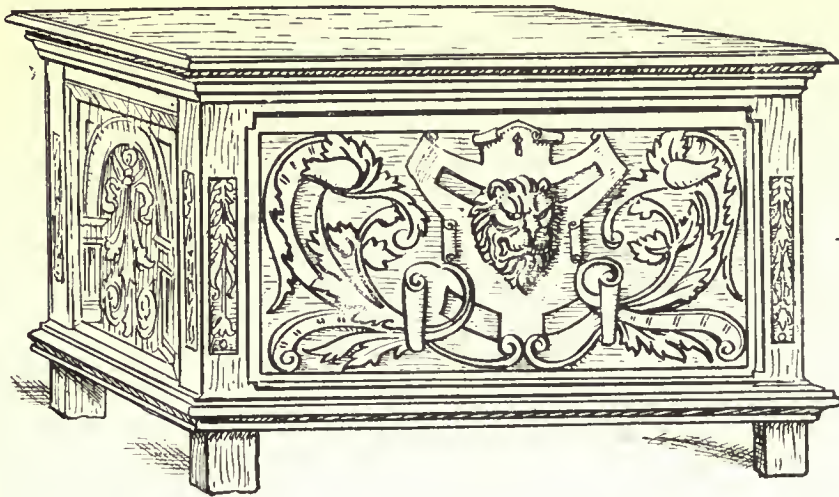
Consequently, we find in French architecture of this time, as in our own Tudor style, a mixture of Gothic and Renaissance elements. Gothic work did not yield all at once to its new rival, neither did Renaissance construction or detail establish itself completely at one stride. In the French châteaux and palaces built or altered in the reign of Francis I. columns and capitals semi-Gothic or semi-Renaissance in character are found side by side; an archway of pointed type has mouldings or capitals of classical form, a piece of rugged Gothic heraldry may be found carved next to a Renaissance pilaster, the ornament of the latter being the latest import of the then new Italian fashion. The drawing given with this chapter of a fireplace from one of the old French châteaux illustrates these characteristics of fusion and change of style.

The general arrangement follows the old mediæval type of chimney-piece; the ceiling beams and the heraldic panel containing the Salamander badge of Francis I. are also Gothic in character, but the other details of pilaster, wreaths, capitals and acanthus brackets are directly inspired by Renaissance work, and very probably executed by Italian craftsmen.

The furniture examples which accompany this interior show the same state of transition, but it will be noticed that they are purer and less fantastic than the contemporary work in England. France was nearer Italy, more directly in touch with Italian art, whereas we received our knowledge of Renaissance detail at second-hand either through France or Flanders, and in looking back at Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean work, we see a more garbled version of the original. It is also later in arriving at completeness and finish, the change from Gothic to Renaissance taking place quicker in France than in England. Still, there are many points of contact and parallels of style in the oak-chest and the two armchairs with Tudor and Jacobean work, but the console table of about 1560 is almost pure Italian Renaissance in detail and finish, a state at which English work did not arrive till long afterwards.

What are called the "Louis" and "Rococo" styles are the best known in French interior decoration, but this short introduction to the rise of the Renaissance in France will prepare the way for a clearer understanding of those later periods.

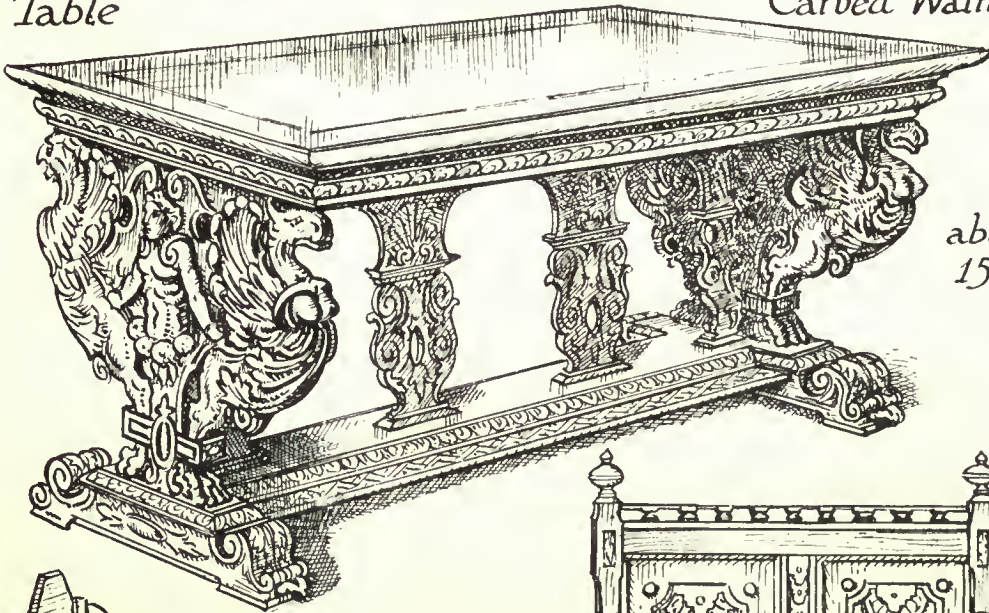
By the middle of the 16th century the Renaissance had become fully established in France. In buildings of a secular character it had almost entirely superseded the Gothic style, and in ornamental detail the new style was even employed in the interior decoration of the churches. As in England, a Gothic church is frequently found to contain a screen or choir stalls of Renaissance design, so the same fashion



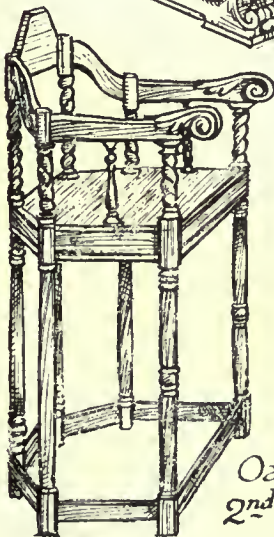
Oak
Coffin
French
First half of
16th century

Table

Carved Walnut

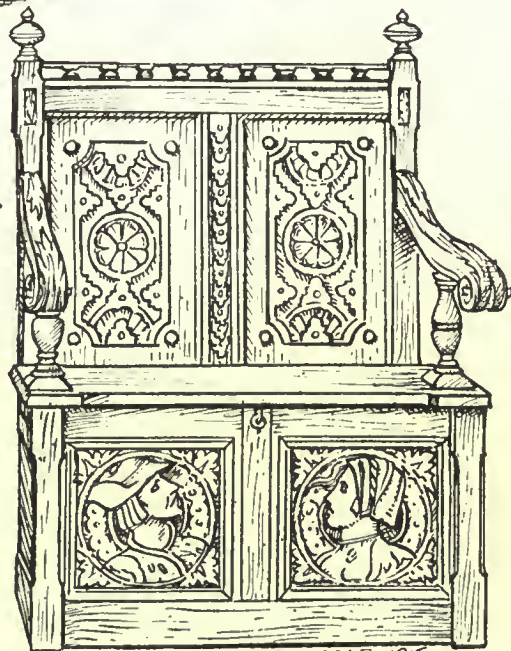


about
1560

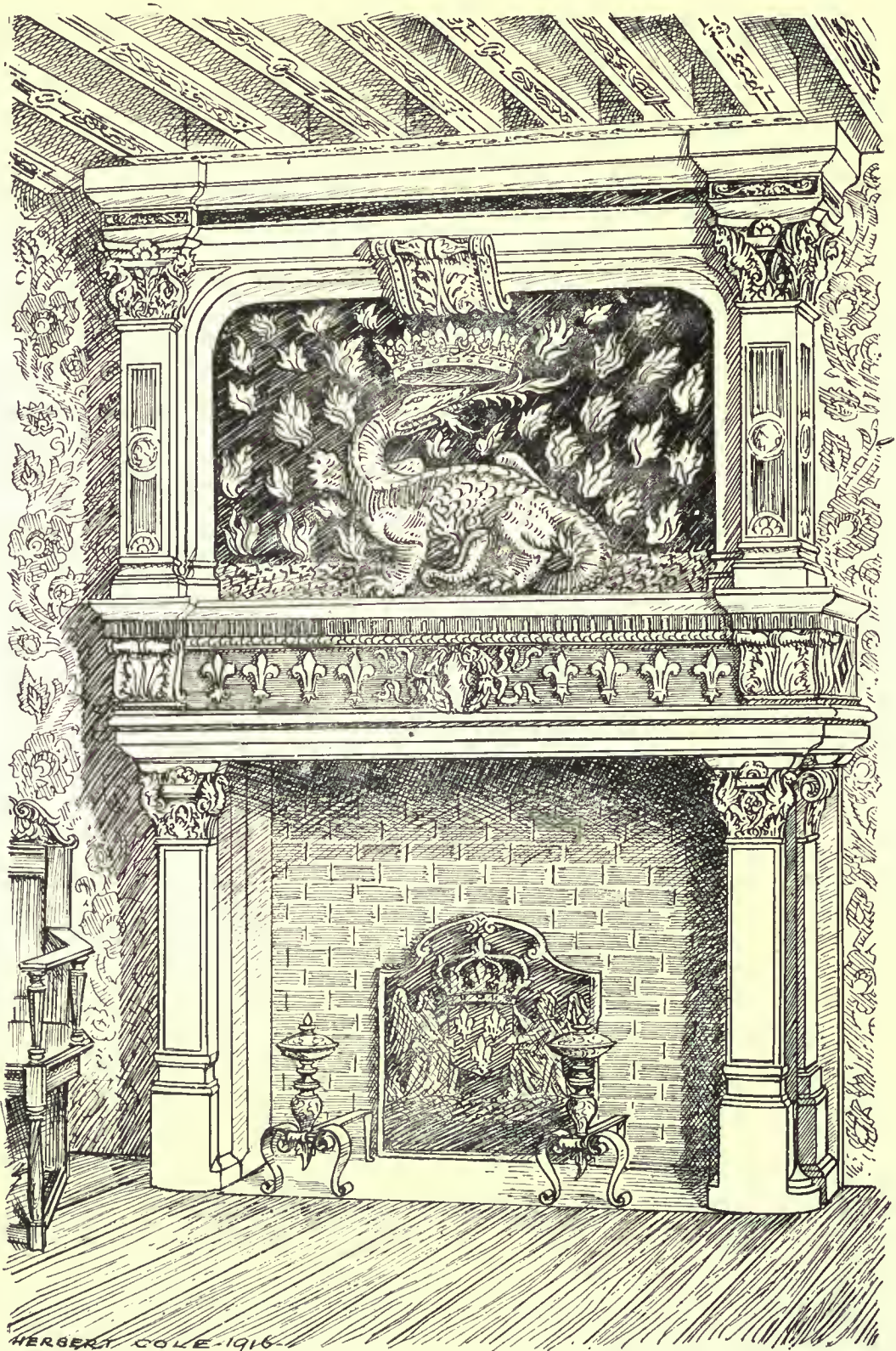


Arm-Chair
carved oak
French
16th cent.

Oak Arm chair
2nd half 16th cent.



HERBERT COLE - 1916 -



HERBERT COLE - 1916

Chimney-piece - French

Period of Francis I -

may be seen at a still earlier date creeping into the sacred edifices of France.

The French Renaissance work is earlier and more fully developed than our own, and it is interesting to note the differences which characterise the same style as expressed by the two nationalities. Ours is somewhat rougher in quality and at this period the grotesques are somewhat coarser owing, perhaps, to our Renaissance details coming less direct from Italy. Details of the new style came across the sea from Flanders and Germany, as well as from France; consequently we expressed ourselves through mixed influences in a more marked degree than the French craftsmen, who received their inspiration from Italy more at first hand.

As our illustrations show, very beautiful pieces of furniture and decoration were executed in this period; the chair and cabinet stand on p. 46, for instance, are, both of them, chaste in design and proportion, and tastefully reticent in ornamentation. These two pieces are very like Italian work of the period, and in many cases it is so difficult to arrive at a decision that they are sometimes labelled in our museums, French *or* Italian. On the other hand, a more easily recognisable style was developed by the French craftsmen, of which the large cabinet may be taken as a typical specimen, and which errs generally on the score of over-elaboration and disturbing richness of detail.

Heads, figures, half-figures, grotesques, animal, bird, fish and plant forms are very often crammed into a composition and bound together with those curling or interlacing scrolls, commonly known as strap-work. Elizabethan work is much the same, but by Jacobean times we evolved something of our own from these things, and it is interesting to compare English and French work of these times in order to notice the parting of the ways.

In our Jacobean wood carving the "gouge and chisel mark" character of the technical handling of the material was frankly and excellently expressed; about the full blown French work a great perfection of finish in modelling was attained, but with a tendency to smoothness, like marble, or metal work. This is, of course, a generalisation; there were different degrees of excellence and varieties of local character in French work as in our own. Some of the work in Northern France was rougher, bolder and less Italian in style and finish.

Francis I., to whom the Renaissance in France owed so much of its development, died in 1547 and was succeeded by his son, Henri II.

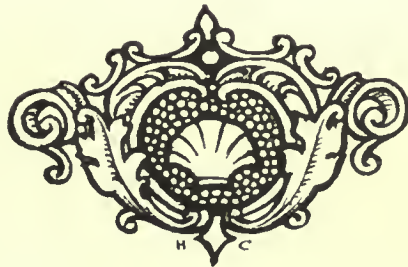
Unlike his father, this King possessed little enthusiasm for arts and learning. He was of a gloomy and taciturn disposition, but his reign stamped its influence upon the arts in another way. His mistress, Diane de Poitiers, practically ruled the Court while he lived, and was probably the most powerful personage of the time in France. She was a beautiful woman, but of a cold and imperious temperament, which had a somewhat chilling effect on the arts of design, for her patronage was vast in its extent. Chateaux and palaces were built under her orders, and her badge and monogram interlaced with that of the King are to be found in countless places and on innumerable objects of art produced in France at this time. The panel on p. 47 shows the interlaced D. and H. in the centre cartouche, while the King's initial is enclosed with a crescent moon above and three interlaced crescent moons repeat the lady's badge below—the reference being to Diana, the moon-goddess of Greek mythology. In spite of the fact that she was a King's mistress, she stood for the strict Catholic ecclesiastical party in the Court of France, as opposed to the more pleasure-loving element, and the more cold and formal French art work of the time is therefore attributed largely to her influence and patronage.

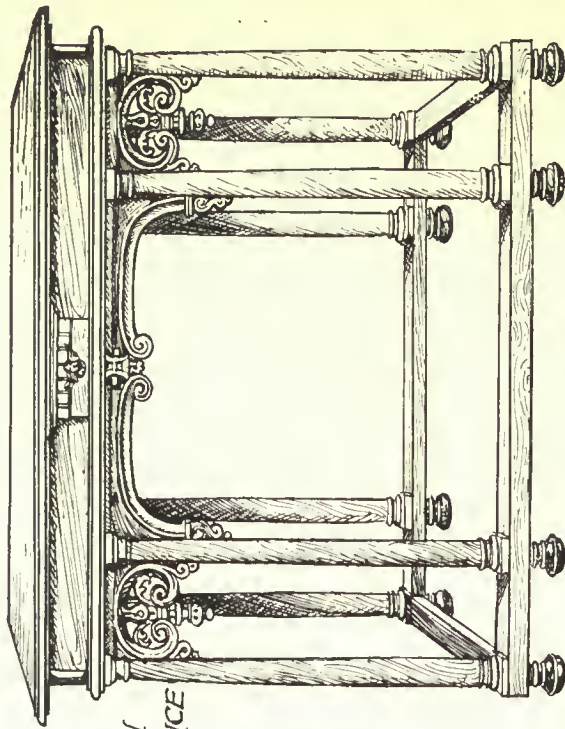
As in England of Elizabeth's day, so in France of the time we are considering, the nobility and gentry prided themselves on being connoisseurs and amateurs in all that related to architecture and the allied arts. They collected pictures and statuary, as well as designing or suggesting the designs of their palaces to the architects they employed.

The queen of Henri II. was Catherine de Medici, and after the death of her husband, when the influence of Diane abruptly terminated, she carried on the arts of building and decoration with the aid of her favourite architects and sculptors, painters and craftsmen.

Great architects arose in answer to the demands of the time. Jean Bullant, Pierre L'Escot, and Philibert Delorme may be mentioned among the builders of palaces and chateaux. Jean Goujon may be cited as the most prominent native sculptor of decorative talent. Pierre L'Escot was employed by Francis I. on the palace of the Louvre, and Delorme and Bullant on the palace of the Tuileries by Catherine de Medici.

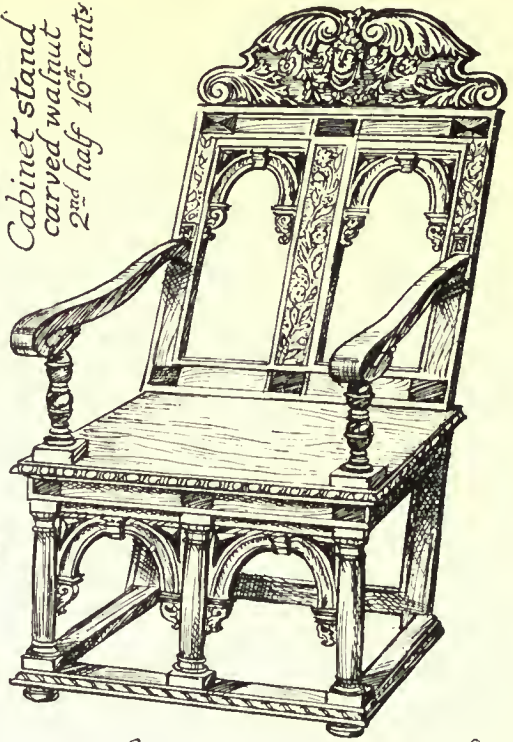
The fireplace and panels reproduced in our illustrations will give a good general idea of the style of interior decoration at this period.



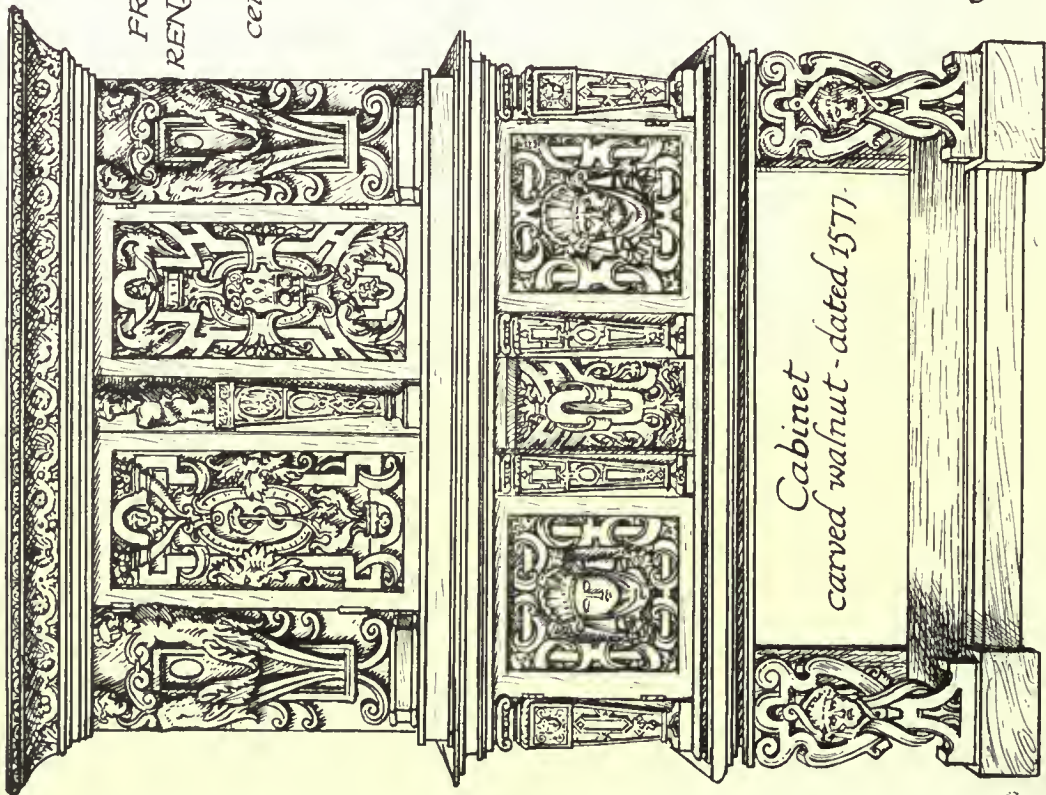


FRENCH
RENAISSANCE
16th
century

Cabinet stand
carved walnut
2nd half 16th century



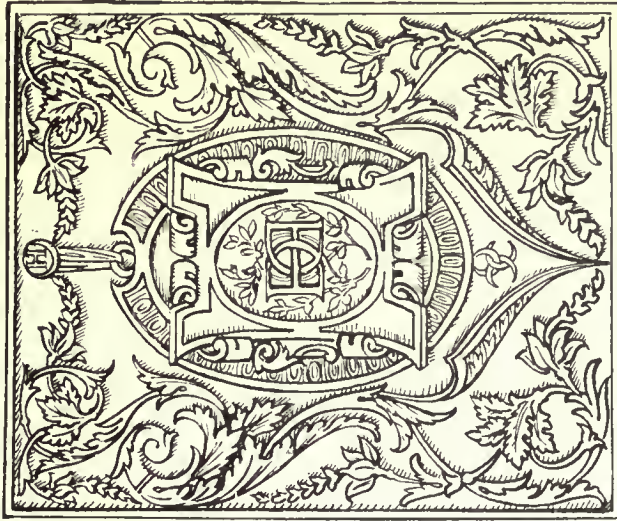
Chair - carved & inlaid
walnut - about 1588



Cabinet
carved walnut - dated 1577.

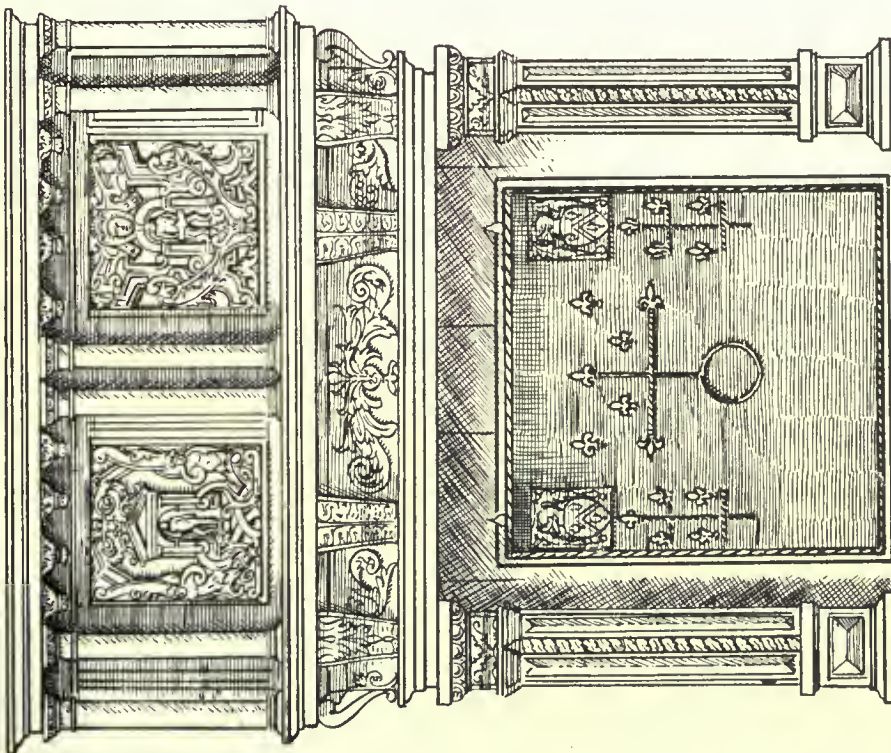
HERBERT COLE - 1917.

FRENCH
RENAISSANCE
16th
century



*Carved wood panel
period of Henri II*

*Carved wood panel
period of Henri III*



Fireplace ~ period of Henri II

HERBERT COLE - 1916 -

CHAPTER XIII.

LOUIS XIII.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to give examples of each reign in the chronological list of French monarchs. In the last chapter we arrived at the period of Henri II., when the forms of the Italian Renaissance had become firmly grafted on to French arts and crafts, but as yet things had not settled down to a marked and well-defined national style. The same may be said of the succeeding reigns of Henri III. and Henri IV., except, perhaps, that the latter style is characterised by a liking for more ponderous and massive forms. We still find the influence of Italian work paramount both in architectural arrangement and decorative detail, and to give further examples would only mean broadly to repeat the spirit of our last chapter; but with the advent of Louis XIII. the characteristically "French" styles commence. The preference for certain combinations of decorative form settles down in this reign to a distinct style. Something which is not "Italian" strikes us in looking at a room or piece in this period. Trophies of arms, cartouches, festoons, and bouquets, ribbons and wreaths are lavishly employed, and a preference for richness of effect obtained by gilding the prominent ornaments or members has come to stay. Nor must we forget the use of mirrors as an important part of the decorative scheme, an item which became still more noticeable in the succeeding "Louis" styles. About the decoration of the Louis Treize period there is a certain reticence and moderation when compared with the restless and extravagant detail of the Rococo work which followed after, though we can see where the love of richness and courtly pomp is leading. The illustration of a room on p. 49 may be taken as a general type of the decoration of this period, although it verges in some details upon the Louis XIV. style. In the colouring employed an extensive use was made of white or cream and gold for the woodwork and plaster ornament, with secondary tones of a neutral character. The more important colour passages, however, were obtained by pictures and tapestries panelled into the walls, and, it may be mentioned in passing, that the famous Gobelin tapestry manufactory was established in 1630. A favourite scheme for the chairs and stools was the combination of crimson velvet or figured brocades, with gold fringe, a fashion which continued long after the period we are now considering.

The carved oak door, cabinet, or chair, is not, however, quite superseded by the gilded article as yet. The chairs illustrated on p. 50, carved in oak and upholstered in leather, stamped or plain with brass nails on the edging, are quite typical of the time. Cabinets and writing tables and other pieces of furniture now came into fashion, in which ebony, bone, or ivory, and metal inlays were employed, leading on to that remarkable period of French furniture design known as "Boule" and "Ormolu" work, but a full description of this phase must be left to a later chapter.

Mantelpieces of white and coloured marbles with

fire-dogs of wrought or cast iron, bronze, brass, or gilt metal, were a principal motive in the decorative scheme. Fire-backs also continued to be made with heraldic ornaments, badges and monograms, while the polished parquet flooring must not be forgotten as playing a part in that effect of splendour and magnificence which seems to have been the main endeavour of the architects and designers of the period.

Louis XIII. died in 1643, so that his reign and the style named after him may be said to cover the larger part of the first half of the seventeenth century.

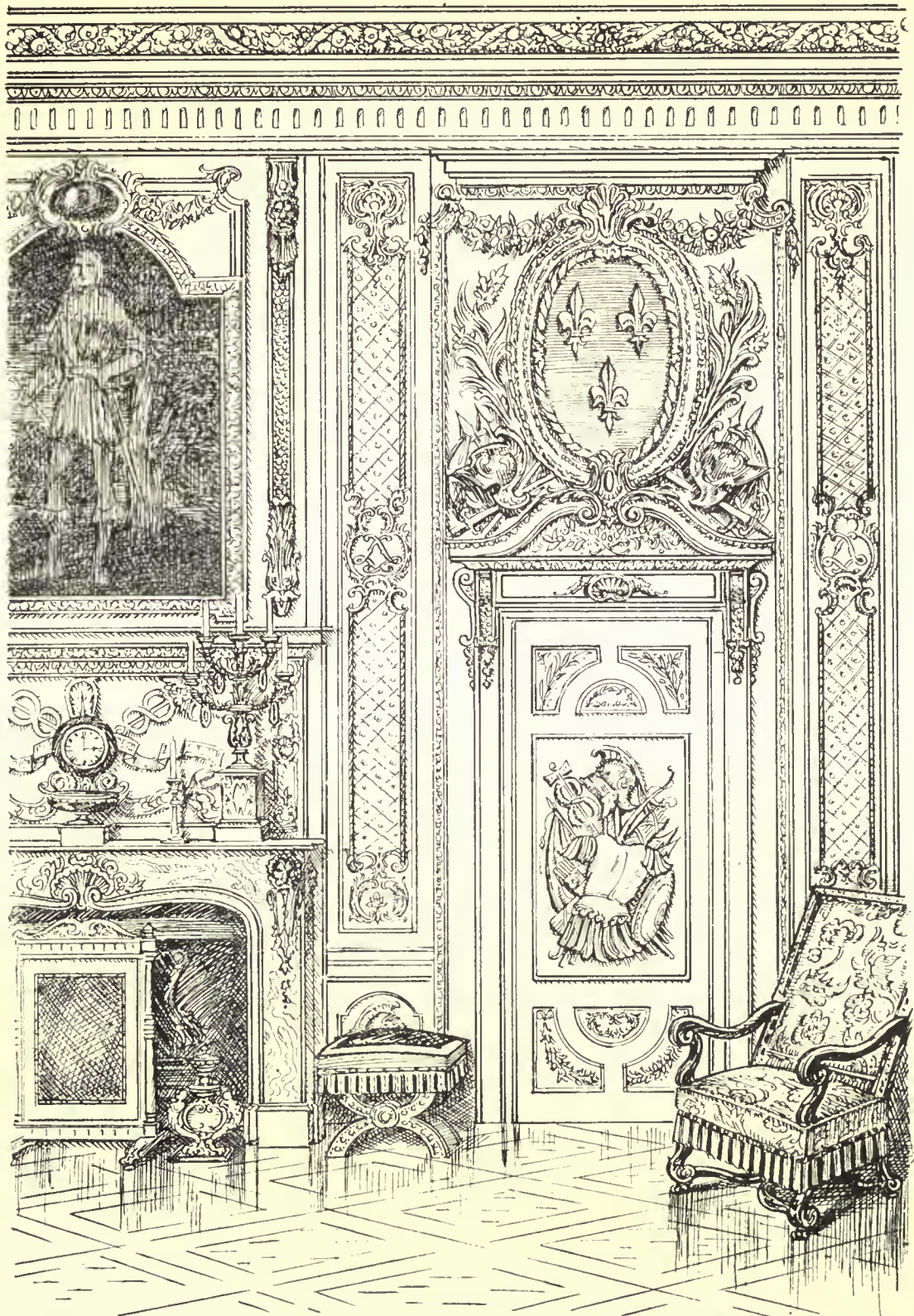
His most celebrated designer was Simon Vouet, who, born in 1590, and dying in 1649, visited Italy, where he studied architecture, interior decoration, and the works of the later great Venetians, like Paul Veronese.

He became painter to the King, and, besides being employed on designing for tapestries, was a prodigious worker in many directions, his decorative schemes being published by engravings from his drawings. He had a great influence on French style, and some of the celebrated designers and painters of Louis the Fourteenth's reign were his pupils, so that he may be said to be the forerunner of the style of "Le Grand Monarque."

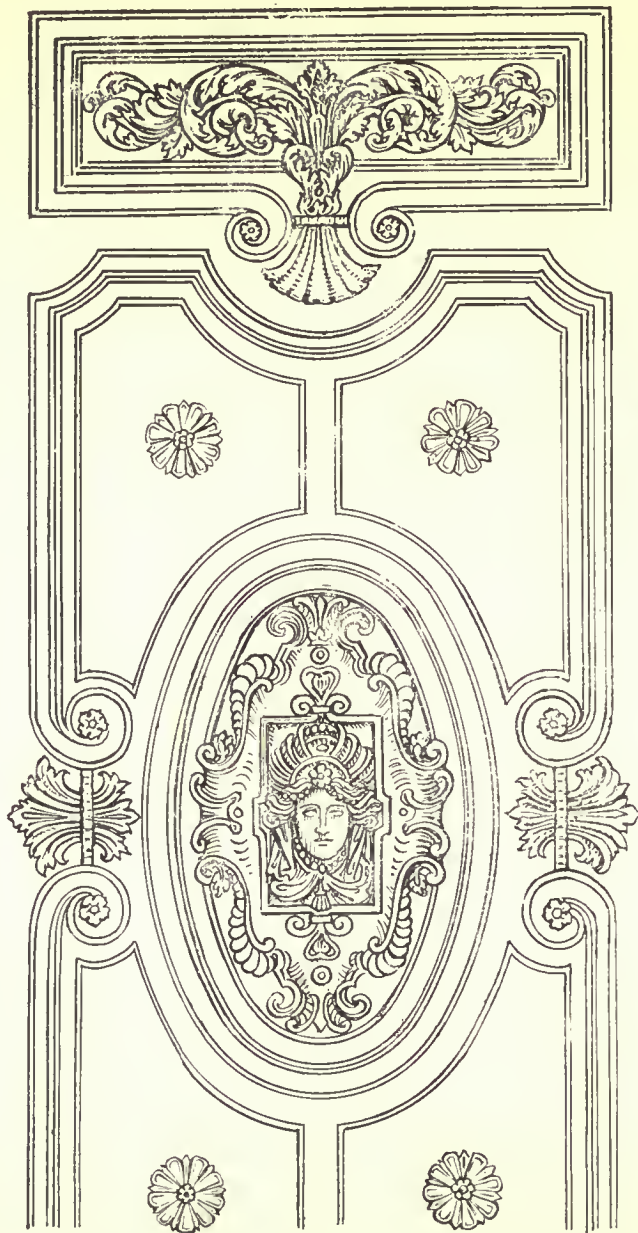
The celebrated Cardinal Richelieu lived in the reign of Louis XIII., and rivalled the King as a patron of the arts. Jacques Lemercier built for him the Palais Cardinal, and so splendid and sumptuous was this edifice, that, acting from policy, as did Cardinal Wolsey under similar circumstances, he presented it as a gift to his royal master, feeling probably that it was better to be credited with the virtue of generosity than to lose both palace and court favour by being accused of the vice of presumption. The building thus passed into the possession of the King, and was afterwards known as the Palais Royal.

Much beautiful work was executed in this age in the way of plaster ceilings, friezes and panel ornaments. Colour and gilding entered largely into it, and running along with it was the fashion of painted grotesques and arabesques, which were more or less close imitations of the same kind of decoration carried out by Raphael and his assistants in the Vatican and other Italian buildings. Panels and pilasters contained this type of decoration, which consists of figures or monsters, animal and bird forms, terminating in acanthus scrolls, wreaths, cornucopias teeming with fruits and flowers, festoons, miniature temples and tabernacles, trophies of arms, and a hundred other dissimilar details. In spite of this, however, they were welded into the scheme in such a manner that they became part of the French style.

Silk and velvet brocaded coverings for chairs, stools, and couches became the vogue, some being imported from the East, some from Venice, while other patterns were manufactured in France as imitations and cheaper substitutes for the former.



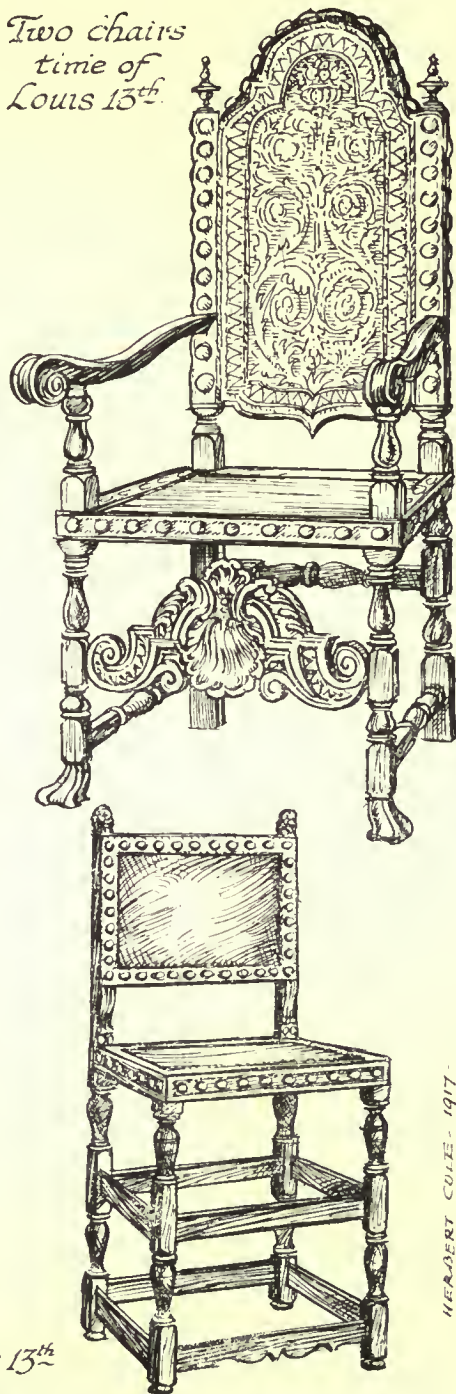
Portion of room in the style of Louis XIII ("Louis Treize") HERBERT COLE 1917.



Ceiling decoration~ style of Louis 13th

Wall panel-carved wood~style of Louis 13th

*Two chairs
time of
Louis 13th*



HERBERT COLE - 1917



It is interesting to those who are fond of historical comparisons to notice the difference in date between some of the French and English furniture. Some of the tall chairs with carved framework and cane seatings and backs which we associate with the name of Charles II. were fashionable in France much earlier in the seventeenth century. Too much reliance must not, however, be placed upon dates, as in all these periods there is much overlapping, and one style melts or slides gradually,

if not always gracefully, into the next. The architect, Mansart, flourished also in the reign of Louis XIII. He invented the feature known as the "Mansart" roof, that particular form in which the slates or tiles descend almost perpendicularly over the upper story of a building, and pierced by attic windows, is both roof and wall at the same time. It is a feature which gives a distinctly "French" look even in our country to the buildings upon which it is employed.



CHAPTER XIV.

LOUIS XIV.

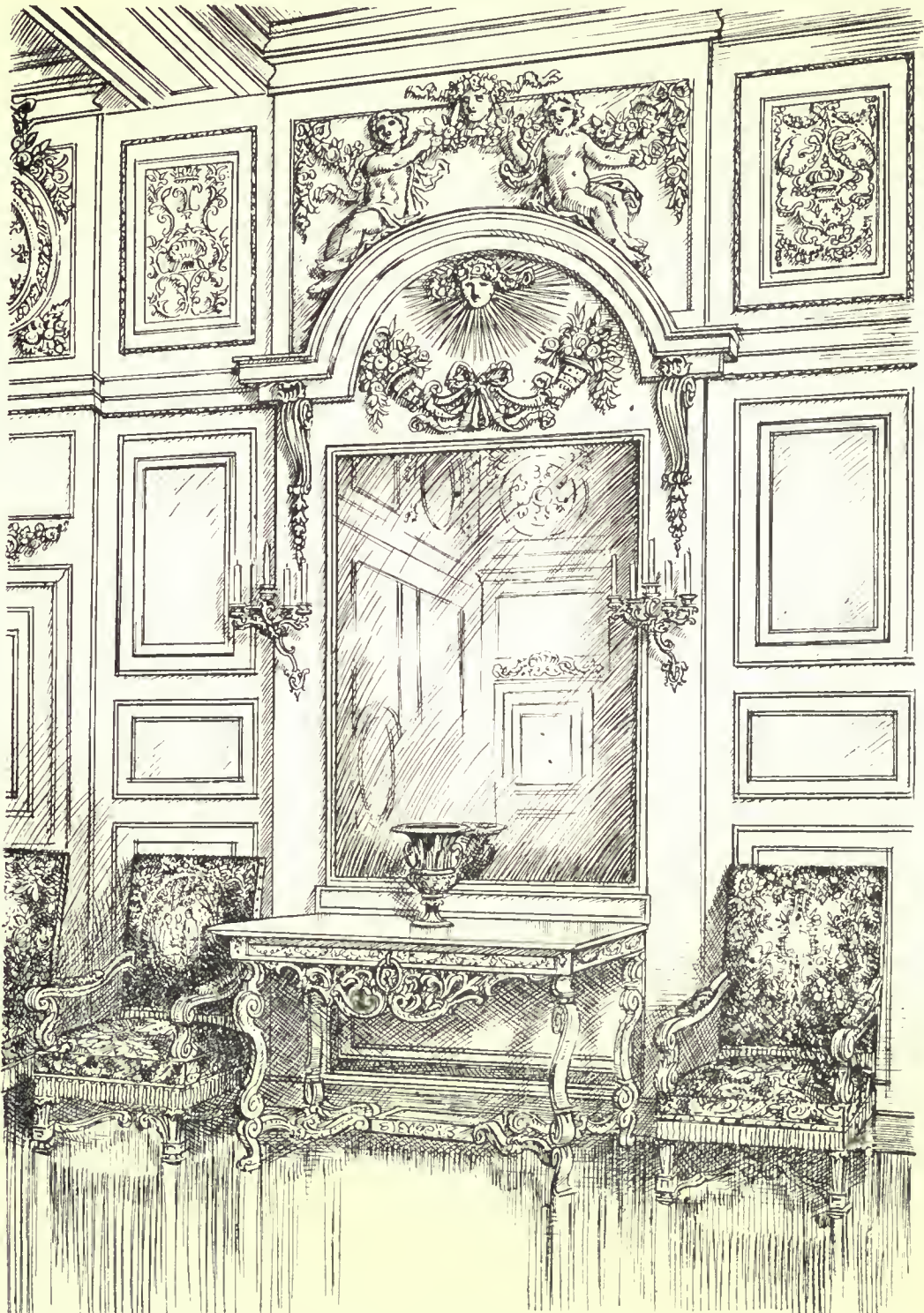
The period of Louis XIV. is a notable one in French history. The reign of "Le Grand Monarque" was one of more than sixty years, and during a long life, in which he enjoyed almost unlimited power and resources, he had ample opportunities of gratifying his love of splendour, and his desire to shine as a great patron of all the arts. It must be placed to his credit that he possessed the faculty of attracting first-class ability and genius in order to carry out his ambitious projects, and the celebrities in arms, in statesmanship, in literature, architecture, and the ornamental arts who adorned his reign are almost too many to mention. Such men as Molière, Racine, Corneille, and La Fontaine in literature and the drama, Perrault in architecture, and Le Brun, Berain, Le Pautre, and André Charles Boulle in the decorative arts would have made any age illustrious. With Louis' love of magnificence, and his abundant patronage, it is no wonder that we look back to a period of great and varied productiveness in all branches of the arts, but it is, perhaps, by the art of the decorators and furniture designers and craftsmen that we mainly distinguish the style of the time. The taste of the King and his court was reflected in their work, and in the very materials they used. Furniture, as we have already noticed, had been carved and gilded in previous reigns, but never before was there such a rage for inlay of wood, metal, tortoise-shell, ivory and enamel. It was an age of luxury, pride and ostentation, but, it must be added, that it was also impressive, dignified and virile. The feverish and fantastic grace of the "Rococo" had not yet set in. In all the periods of French decorative arts (and our own of the 17th and 18th centuries were influenced by them) we find this spirit of glittering pomp and showy elaboration, and to many lovers of art it spells "abomination." For this attitude there is good reason, and a "French Revolution" can be instanced in proof of it. True as it may be that all this luxurious art was carried out at the bidding of a dominant class, it may nevertheless be claimed that the product of all human effort is intensely interesting, artistic effort in particular, for that is what we are considering, and in the age of Louis XIV. we find an astounding output of artistic design and craftsmanship, reaching a perfection of accomplished execution which stands, even to-day, on a very high plane.

Colbert, the chief minister of Louis the Grand, was almost as ardent a patron as his master. He was a great and far-seeing statesman, and with fine imaginative incentive he laboured to improve and extend all the liberal arts, sciences and commerce of his country. The architectural features of Paris derived much of their beauties from his influence; he placed the Gobelin tapestry manufactory on a much more extensive basis and encouraged lavishly all the lesser arts of life, for under his administration the products of this factory were not confined to the weaving of tapestry, but included furniture—carved and inlaid with marquetry, bronze sculptures, gold and silversmiths' work. Charles Le Brun, the painter of large imposing decorations, was appointed head designer and art-director of the Gobelin tapestries. He

painted the walls, panels, and ceilings of the King's palaces of the Louvre and Versailles; that is to say, with the aid of an army of decorators and assistants under his control. His decorations can be seen to-day, and the tapestries of Gobelin have become celebrated all over the world; their subjects, like those of his paintings, range from the Biblical, historical and mythological to the allegorical or purely ornamental.

The gods and heroes of ancient Greece and Rome, their loves, adventures and battles, were depicted on wall or ceiling side by side with the military achievements of Louis XIV. and his generals; trophies of arms, winged figures, male and female, festoons of fruits and flowers, were painted or tapestried as the occasion arose. Le Brun was a man of great versatility, and his influence on the decorative arts of France in this reign was extensive, for he enjoyed large powers of direction and control. Jean Le Pautre, Jean Berain, and Daniel Marot were also prominent decorative designers for schemes of rooms, fittings, and furniture during this period. Their designs were published by copperplate engravings, and had a wide circulation, and, no doubt, helped to form the style of the day. Le Pautre was a most prolific designer of ceilings, chimney-pieces, mirror frames, and all other architectural and decorative accessories.

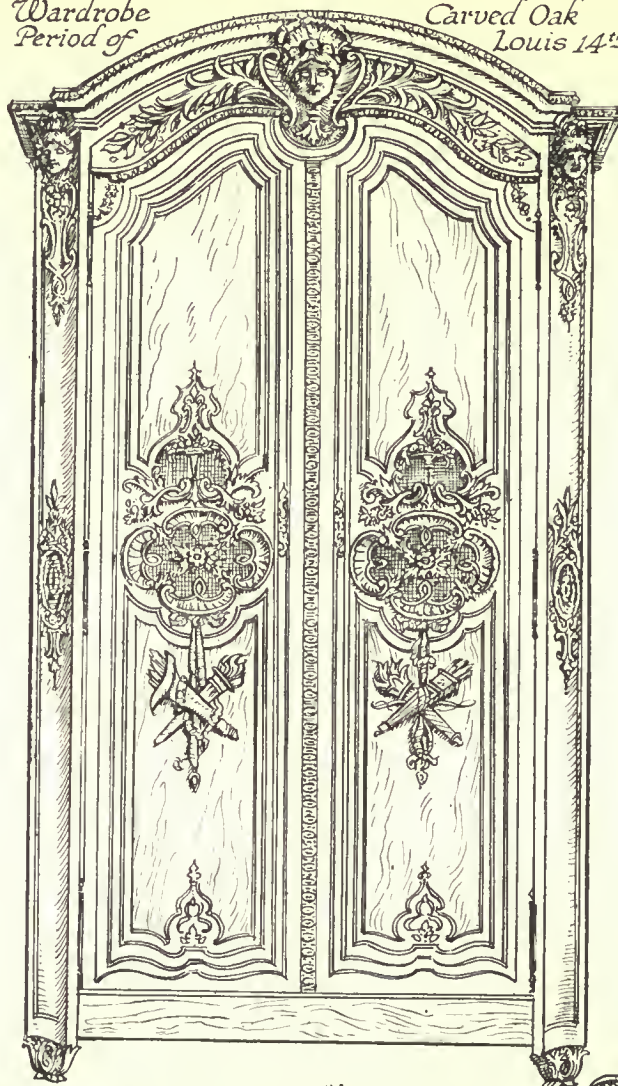
Berain is more celebrated for strap-work and fantastic arabesques, which were applied to the painted panels of doors or pilasters, while Marot was distinguished for furniture design, especially the elaborate and wonderful bedsteads, with their hangings, embroideries, and fringes. He was also employed by William III. of England, and some of his work may be seen at Hampton Court. He left designs for clocks and furniture inlaid with metal and other materials. Some illustrations of these various art products of the reign of Louis XIV. are given, but a volume of drawings would be required to illustrate fully all the different phases of the arts and crafts of this crowded period, which extended, roughly speaking, from 1650 to 1715. André Charles Boulle, whose work is now known by his name, was perhaps the most characteristic designer and craftsman who worked under the patronage of Louis XIV. He was skilled in architecture, modelling and painting as well as in the technique of cabinet making. The chief feature of his work in the latter department is the combination of inlaid brass, wood, tortoise-shell and white metal, which he turned out in large quantities, but with extraordinary skill of execution and finish. Thin sheets of the above-mentioned materials were placed together in three or fourfold layers, and then patterns of leaf, scroll, or shield and strap-work were sawn through them. When taken apart, they were counter-changed, the brass or tortoise-shell pieces being fitted into the matrix or plate of ebony, or *vice versa*, as required, the result being that the ornament, and its background, received a mutual contrast of colour and texture of material. Brass mounts protected edge and corner or formed protecting mouldings. Cabinets and commodes, clocks and caskets were treated in this way, and in some



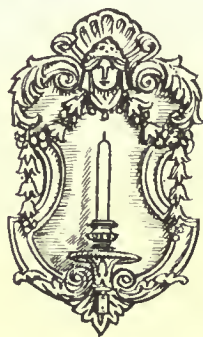
Room decoration - period of Louis 14th: ("Louis Quatorze") HERBERT COLE 1917

Wardrobe
Period of

Carved Oak
Louis 14th

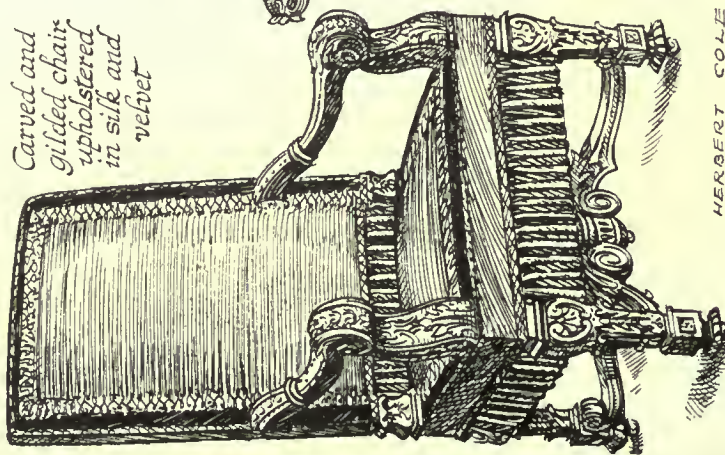


Carved Oak panel ~ Louis 14th



Wall Sconce

Carved and
gilded chair
upholstered
in silk and
velvet



MERSERT COLE ~ 1917 ~

cases further adorned by figure and animal forms or ornament cast in bronze or brass, and occasionally gilded. A prodigious quantity of these articles came from his workshops, and in every great museum, specimens of his skill and that of his workmen may be seen. The Wallace Collection in London possesses some fine examples of his style. The wardrobe and panel in our illustrations to this chapter show Louis XIV. woodcarving in its most characteristic aspect. The gilded chair and those covered with tapestry, and the table shown in the interior on p. 53, are examples of the furniture in general use among the wealthy of the time. The mirror and panelling of the room are also features typical of the period.

The splendid palace of Versailles, near Paris, was built for Louis XIV. by the architect, J. H. Mansart, and the noble east façade of the Louvre was added by Claude Perrault during his reign. The interiors of both buildings were sumptuously decorated by Le Brun and his assistants.

In the illustrations on pages 57 and 58 will be found some further examples of Louis Quatorze furniture, and some enlarged details, which will show more explicitly the style of ornament employed in this type of work.

The "Boule" manner of inlay and counterchange of surface decoration can here be seen more clearly. The writing table has the groundwork of its surface composed of sheet brass, out of which patterns of the most fantastic design are cut and the resulting spaces are then inlaid with tortoise-shell, mother-of-pearl, and enamel. Great vivacity of colouring is obtained by this means, and the rich golden browns and reds of the tortoise-shell strapwork contrast vividly yet harmoniously with the iridescent tints of the birds, fruits and foliage. This particular example is a remarkable piece of design and workmanship. It is in the style of Jean Berain, and Chinese work seems to have influenced him.

Gaily coloured paraquets perch or swing among festooning vines, obelisks, pagodas, or baskets of fruit, and reticulated fret patterns cover the surfaces of the drawers and table-top with dazzling effect, and in one panel a couple of white cats take the place of birds. Such motives would probably be suggested to the designer of this piece by the curios and treasures which the traders of the time brought from China, India, Persia, Japan, and the Far East. They found a ready market in Europe, and afterwards led to that love of "Chinoises," as they were termed in France, and again in England to schemes "in the Chinese taste," as our great grandfathers phrased it.

The "Boule" clock is perhaps a more ordinary example of the furniture which came from his workshops. Here we have the usual combination of brass, tortoise-shell and ebony, or perhaps ebonised wood. The tortoise-shell commonly used was of a dense brown, almost black variety, the redder kind being kept for those specimens where colour was more freely used, as in the cabinet described above.

The foundation, or frame, of the pieces was frequently of oak, and the shell patterns were fastened down by glue, while the brass mounts and plates were secured by metal pins. The cabinet makers who produced this type of furniture were called by the name of "*ébénistes*," showing that whether they used ebony or not, the effect of ebony was a characteristic of their work. Boulle was quite an able sculptor, and the grotesque heads, the cupids, sphinxes and alle-

gorical figures with which he supplemented his inlays are charming little works of art in themselves. The dials of these clocks are most beautiful in design and effect; varied metals, gilding, engraving and relief were all employed to embellish them. It may be imagined that work like this necessitated a very high degree of skill, and quite an army of sculptors, engravers, chasers and smiths were employed by Boulle in the designing, modelling and casting of these details. The combination of tortoise-shell and brass inlay with these gilt or brass mounts is often spoken of as "Boule and ormolu work."

Another feature of Louis Quatorze work will be found in the carved and gilt pedestals and candelabra which helped to give that air of sumptuous richness so beloved in these courtly times. They are very beautifully designed and elaborately carved. A hanging candelabrum is given here as an illustration, but similar designs were often adapted to the side walls as projecting bracket-lights. Besides those carved in wood and gilded there were others made in gilt bronze and "Boule" work. The French call these articles "*girandoles*," as a general term, but apply the names "*Bras appliqué*" and "*Bras de Cheminée*" (*bras*, meaning arm), to those attached to the wall and to the sides of a chimney-piece respectively.

The central hanging specimens were called "*lustres*," a term which survived in the glass chandeliers and chimney ornaments so dear to Victorian respectability. The pedestals were used to support a detached candle-stick, a statuette, or vase, besides fulfilling their destiny as ornamental enrichments in the general scheme of decoration.

The panel by Jean Berain, on p. 57, shows his somewhat fanciful and heterogeneous style of ornament. Such panels as this were sometimes executed in colour as part of the painted decoration, and as we have seen above, he also used his powers of design in connection with Boulle's inlaid furniture. There were two Berains, father and son, of the same name.

The carved and gilt mirror here illustrated is also a fine specimen of the period. Louis the Fourteenth paid immense sums of money for mirrors as decorative accessories in the salons of his palaces. They mostly came from Venice, a city which held for centuries a foremost reputation for their manufacture.

Whole rooms in the French palaces were sometimes decorated with mirrors, the most celebrated example being the *Galerie des Glaces*, at Versailles. An effect of great spaciousness and magnificence is here obtained by this means. Arched panels of large dimensions reach from floor to entablature, filled with mirror glass, which is divided into oblong spaces by narrow gilt mouldings. Pilasters of coloured marble support the gilded entablature, while the arched ceiling is covered with painted figure subjects, panelled by gilded stucco mouldings. A parquetry floor, highly polished, completes the magnificent scheme.

The chimney-piece design on p. 57 is typical of the work of Jean Le Pautre. The ornament on it is not of a high order, but the general effect of symmetry, harmony and dignity is undoubtedly impressive.

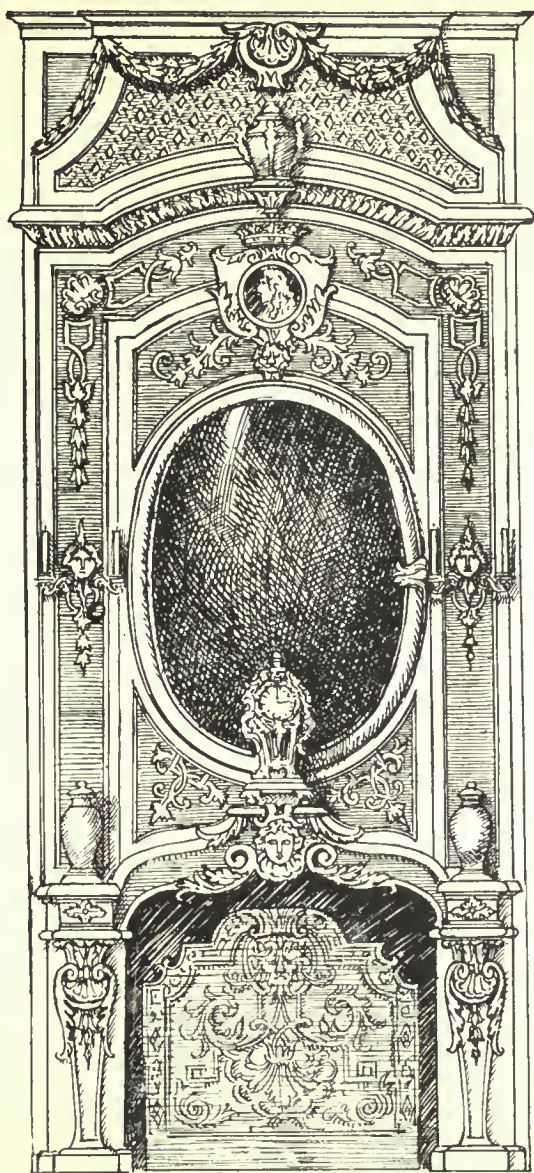
Page after page could, however, be filled with drawings and descriptions of the decoration and furniture of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. The mirrored rooms and galleries, the ceilings painted in perspective illusion with domes and cupolas, columns and entabla-

tures, crowded with figures, the gilt and glitter of moulding and furniture, the velvet upholstery and silken curtains reflected in the polished wood floor, all contributed to the one aim of grandeur and magnificence.

Proud, ostentatious, worldly and luxurious as it all was, a sense of largeness and dignity redeemed it

from the charge of frivolous grace which characterised the decoration which followed in the reign of Louis XV., generally known as the "Rococo" style. Whatever its faults may be, the period of Louis Quatorze stands out prominently in historical art as one of enormous productivity and excellent craftsmanship.





*Design for Chimney-piece & over-mantel
in the style of Jean Le Pautre*



*Decorative
Panel
by Jean Berain*



"Boule" clock



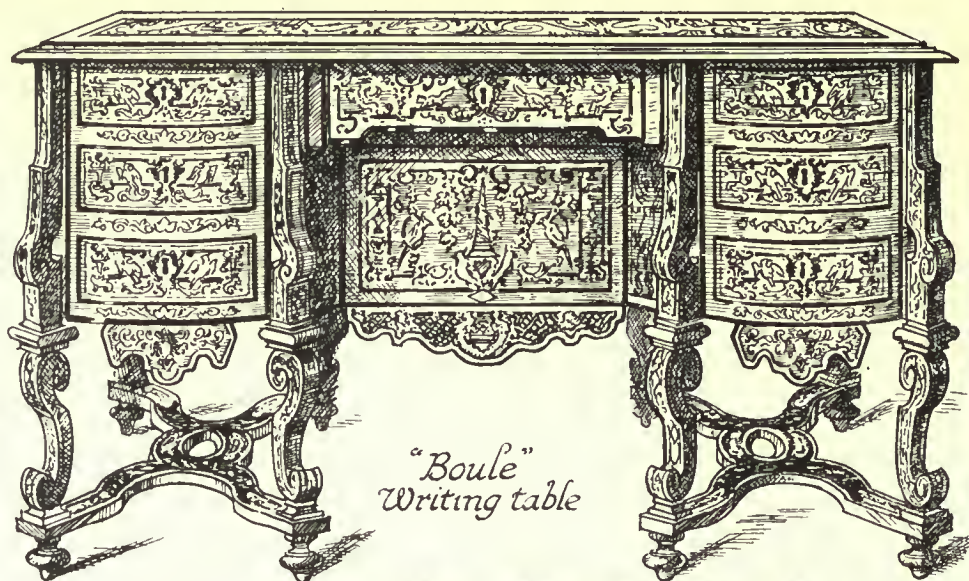
*Decorative
Panel
carved and
gilded wood*

*PERIOD of LOUIS XIV
("Louis Quatorze")*



*Candelabrum
carved and
gilded wood*

HERBERT COLE. 141

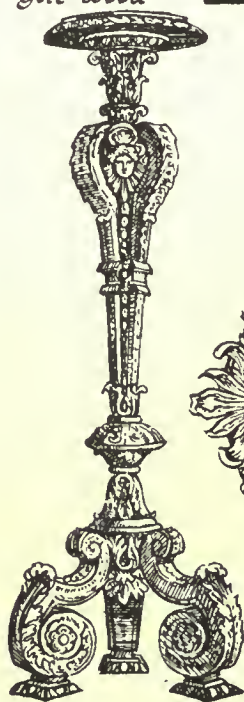


*"Boule"
Writing table*

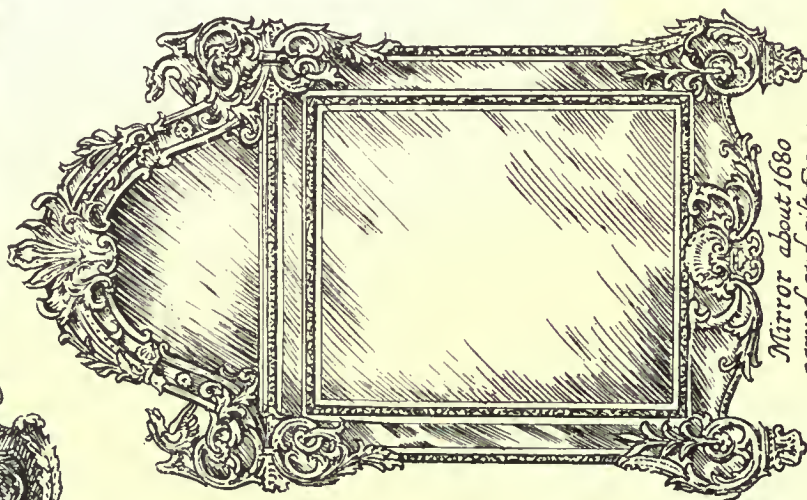


Detail of above

*Pedestal
carved and
gilt wood*



*PERIOD of LOUIS XIV
("Louis Quatorze")*



*Mirror about 1680
carved and gilt frame*

CHAPTER XV.

LOUIS XV. OR "ROCOCO."

Between the styles of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. there is an intervening period called the "Regency," which partakes of the character of both. It is merely another case of that overlapping which occurs in nearly all periods of decoration and which has more than once come under our notice. Sudden and violent changes of fashion in the arts occasionally arise, the pendulum swings from one extreme to the other, from courtly magnificence to coquettish frivolity, but as a rule the periods evolve by a transitional stage in which no violent cleavage is perceptible.

The style of Louis XV. or "Louis Quinze" is quite as generally known as the "Rococo," for it was during the reign of this monarch that the extravagances which characterise its spirit, design, and execution became marked.

The term "Rococo" is of disputed origin, but is generally supposed to be derived from the French word "*roc*," meaning rock or stone in the mass. The designers of this period were fond of introducing "*rocaille*," or what we call "*grotto*" work into their compositions, and had space permitted I would have included some illustrations. The style of work in question is, however, well known, the broken curves, the abundance of shell forms and extravagant scrolls all contribute to form the medley of forced and artificial effect so much sought after at the time. The Chinese often start the growth of their sprays and branches of tree or flower from a broken group of rock or gnarled tree stems, and seeing that Chinese and Japanese decorations were commonly imitated in the 17th and 18th centuries, it is not improbable that the composition of shells, rocks, branches, flowers, scrolls and other details were an outcome of this influence and gradually formed themselves into a distinct style.

While Louis XIV. lived, although the elements which formed the Rococo style were in vogue, a largeness and dignity of design prevailed, and in the main continued under the Regency of Philip, Duke of Orleans, Louis XV. having succeeded to the throne when only five years of age. After this the full tide of the Rococo set in, and all its greatest follies and extravagances were developed during this reign. Luxury, licence and frivolity were but the milder vices of the time. Never was there such a pursuit of all that was gay, glittering and shallow, and the arts reflected the prevalent feeling. Everything was sacrificed to the desire for novelty, eccentricity, and artificiality. There was a perfect fever in design for restless curvature, and the Court had become so satiated with luxurious and ostentatious surroundings that it knew not how to gratify its whims and caprices. Society itself was in a fevered condition, and the blood-letting of the French Revolution was a natural and inevitable consequence.

Taking these conditions into consideration, we are able to understand the meaning of the Rococo style in regard to both cause and effect. To the high and mighty ones of France in those days Nature was an empty name; in life as in art, a shallow artificiality was the prevailing mode. Looking backward with a sense of detachment, we can, however,

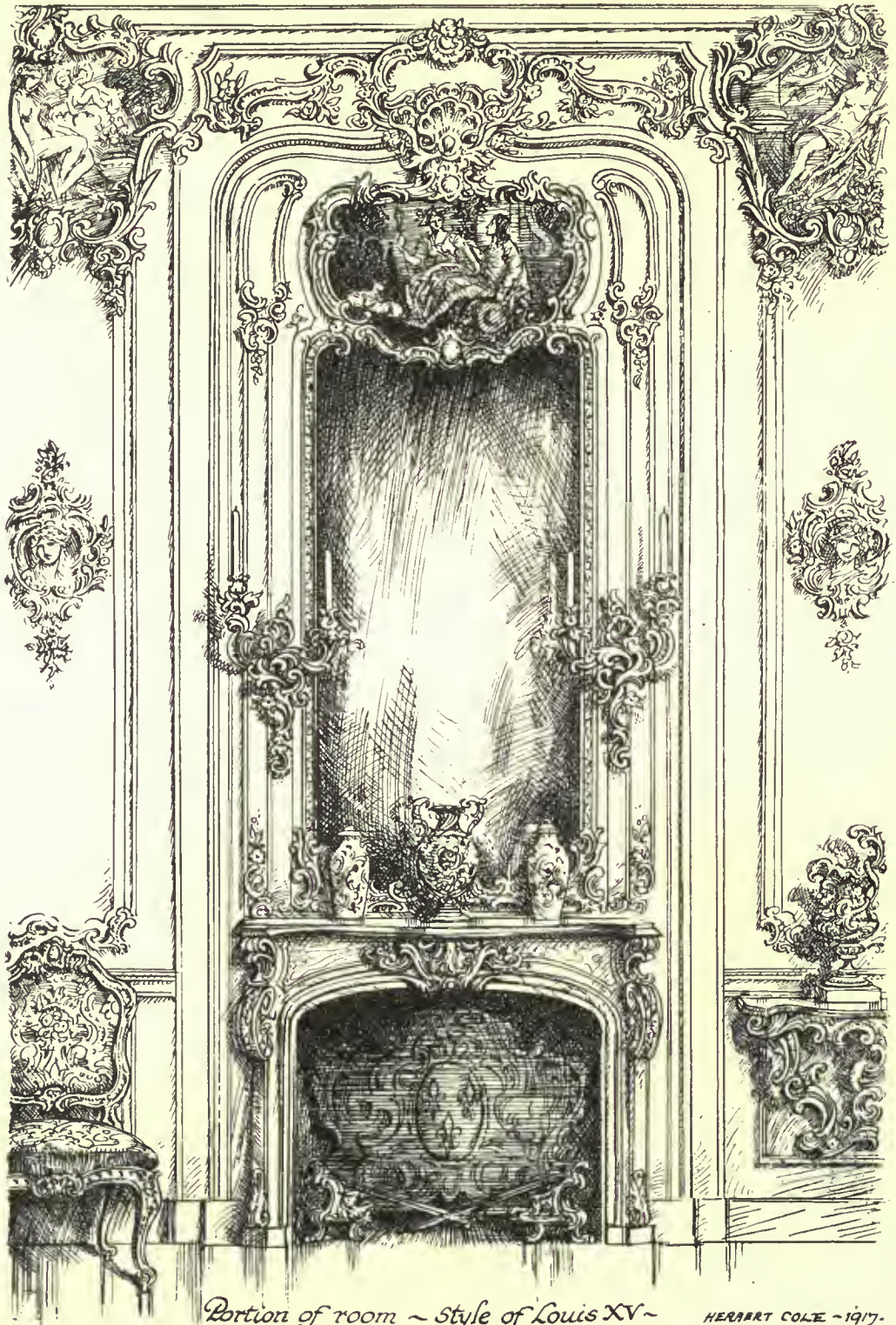
if sufficiently broad-minded, appreciate the grace and gaiety which characterises the style, for the courtiers of the time, if wicked, were wicked gracefully, and this light-hearted (and light-headed) grace is perhaps the one redeeming note in the Rococo.

At no time were there so many craftsmen of wonderful skill; their excess of skill, in fact, enabled them to pander to the capricious tastes of their patrons. In decoration everything was subordinated to the glittering effect of gilded carving, to the glint of mirror glass, and gay, pretty and dainty colouring in painting or tapestry. Most of the furniture had a framework of gilded carving, and silk brocades of rich pattern, but delicate colouring were generally used for purposes of upholstery. Soft sea greens, shell, or rose pink and cerulean blues were favourite tints. The panel mouldings and mirror frames were, of course, gilded, and here we see the object of those tortuous curves, shells, ribbons, flowers and scrolls which pervade all the decorative features. They provide the necessary twist and turn of angle and surface in order that the gilding may get all the value obtainable from light and shadow and attract the eye by its glittering unrestfulness. To assist this effect the panelling was often painted a soft grey instead of white, and it is unquestionably a clever foil to the gold in the mouldings and ornaments, as it also is to the tones of the paintings and tapestries which they framed and embellished. If Art in this period was not at its highest, artifice at least was triumphant. An interior of this kind is shown in the illustration on p. 60. This is the Rococo in its saner aspects; much more extravagant examples could have been given, but where space is limited it is better to show the best specimens of a style than the worst.

The mantel pieces of the time were often very beautifully carved in costly, coloured marbles, and further ornamented by gilding or gilt metal mounts. Construction was largely ignored, sometimes wholly set at nought, as in the candelabra and the bracket or console table attached to the wall. The painting over the mirror is typical of the style inaugurated by Watteau, and continued with less art by his successors and imitators. These painted panels occur on ceilings, over doors and chimney pieces, and in other prominent positions. Arcadian scenes with courtiers posing as shepherds and shepherdesses, fluttering cupids, curly of head and rosy of limb, nymphs bathing in rivulet or fountain (the parklands of Versailles preferred to Nature as a background), garlands and silken draperies, form the scale of notes from which the Rococo painter selected his melodies in colour.

In spite of all this, however, many beautiful things were produced. Sumptuous pieces of furniture, made from rare or varied and costly woods, were embellished with carving, inlay, and metal mountings. Besides oak, beech, chestnut and such-like ordinary woods, cherry, boxwood, ebony, walnut, cedar, yew, lime and others were used for different effects; while veneers, lacquers and polishes were all of the finest quality and workmanship.

The Sèvres porcelain manufactory was founded in



Portion of room ~ Style of Louis XV~

HERBERT COLE ~ 1917.

Gilt clock

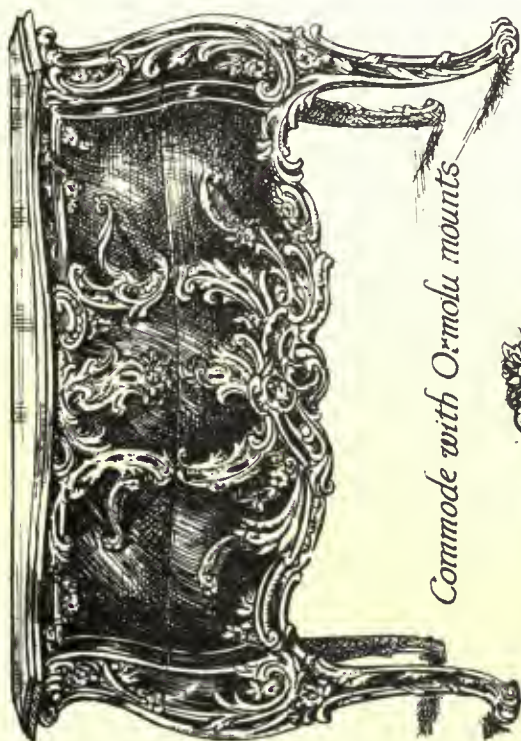


*Arm chair
carved & gilt
upholstered in
Silk Brocade*

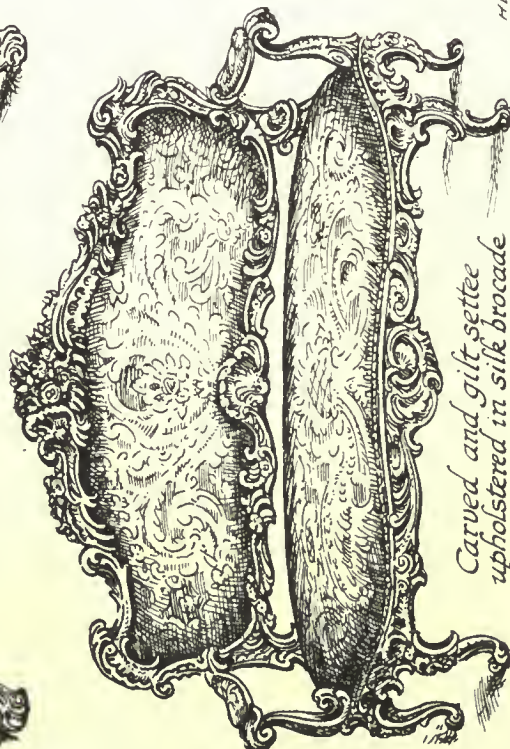


*PERIOD of LOUIS XV
"LOUIS QUINZE"
or "ROCOCO"*

HERBERT COLE - 1917



Commode with Ormolu mounts



*Carved and gilt settee
upholstered in silk brocade*

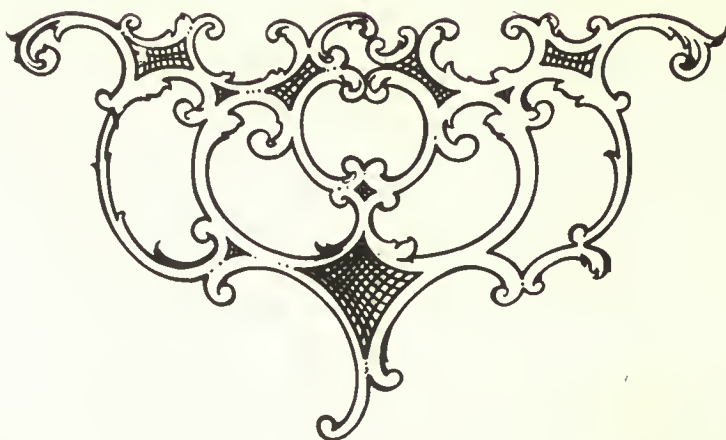
1756, and the work produced there has always been celebrated for its skill and scientific perfection of workmanship. Needless to say, the "Rococo" style invaded the domain of ceramics as it did all other departments of ornamental art. In pottery and silversmith's work the same distorted forms were used, till such ordinary articles as clocks, candlesticks, saltcellars, urns and vases lost all distinctive shape, and were transformed into masses of twisted scrolls, foliage, shells, wings, fish, birds and animals. The clock on p. 61 is quite a reticent and restrained production, compared with some of the articles just mentioned.

Beauvais and Aubusson tapestries and carpets began to rival those of Gobelin. The Beauvais tapestries were used for covering furniture, and competed with paintings in their elaborate methods of shading and colouring. Among the most prominent designers of this time were François Boucher

and Jean Baptiste Oudry, decorative painters of mythology, fables and the chase; Gilles Marie, Oppenord, François de Cuvilles, J. A. Meissonier, Charles Etienne Briseux, in room decoration; Cressent and Riesener in cabinet making.

The Wallace collection in London is rich in examples of these varied workers in the decorative arts.

Towards the end of Louis the Fifteenth's reign a tendency to a more sober and severe style set in; the pendulum of fashion swung to that side once more, and another phase of ornament appeared which became fully developed in the succeeding reign. But the period of Louis XV., 1710-1774, is the one most accurately described by the term "Rococo," a name which afterwards came to mean a style debased, mixed and devoid of serious purpose. Nevertheless the fascination of its grace has survived, and it is used to-day in palace, theatre, hotel, or café where its particular qualities are demanded.



CHAPTER XVI.

LOUIS XVI.

The period of Louis XVI. is characterised by a feeling of greater reticence and severity of style and ornament than the preceding one of the "Rococo." This may be accounted for by the fact that the extravagance and restlessness of the Rococo was bound to burn itself out and, with the natural consequence which generally follows such conditions, a move in the opposite direction was the result. Instead of the extravagant and often outrageous forms, and in place of the medley of objects dragged in by the Rococo designers to produce a glittering and shallow effect of superficial richness, the decorators of the "Louis Seize" period were contented with fewer forms, plainer spaces, and, comparatively speaking, chaste ornament.

Many of their rooms are excellent examples for study if only for the exquisite balance of the relation of plain space to ornamented surfaces, and considerations of just and refined proportion.

Much of the wall panelling, for instance, consisted of well-proportioned spaces framed with choice mouldings, and at each end, or sometimes in the centre, a simple wreath, spray or medallion gave ample satisfaction to the eye by way of ornament. A specimen of this kind may be seen in the detail of wall-panelling decoration given on p. 64.

Perhaps another factor in the change of style was the disposition of the King. Louis XVI. was in reality a studious private gentleman, fond of mechanical amusements, for he is said to have been an expert locksmith, practising the art as a pleasurable hobby. The court no doubt reflected to some degree this change of influence, which was, artistically, wholly to the good. Louis XVI. was born in 1754, succeeded to the throne in 1774, and was beheaded by the French Revolutionists in 1793. He was a mild and amiable prince and suffered for the faults of his predecessors. His queen, Marie-Antoinette, was of a frivolous and thoughtless disposition, and kept alive the follies of the artificial days of Louis XV. She had the miniature palaces of the Grand and Petit Trianon at Versailles arranged as arcadian retreats, where she and her courtly friends played "milkmaid and shepherdess" to their small hearts' delight, while the people of France groaned under a burden of debt and misery.

For all that, the severer style, re-acting upon the Rococo, made itself felt even in the decoration of Marie-Antoinette's apartments. Her boudoir at Fontainebleau is very similar in style to the illustration given in this chapter, while her bedroom at Versailles is of the plainer style mentioned above.

Reference to the illustration on p. 65 will show the change from the unrestrained curvature and wild, if graceful, ornament of the Rococo to a chastened severity which has evidently gone back for inspiration to classic and Renaissance models.

The effect in pen and ink is perhaps inclined to

give the impression of over-decoration, but on seeing the room itself this is not the case. The tint of the panelling is a soft creamy-grey white, upon which the delicate symmetrical ornament is painted in beautifully tender colours, with gilding held in judicious restraint. The general effect, therefore, is that of palatial grace and richness, combined with a welcome sense of repose after viewing specimens of Rococo decoration.

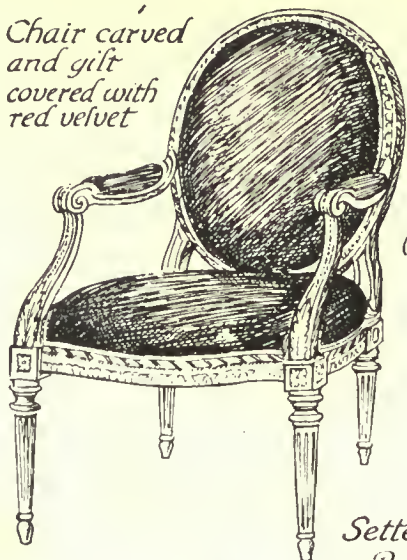
The drawing is, in the main, taken from the boudoir of Madame de Sérilly, one of the favourite maids of honour of Marie Antoinette. The room was purchased many years ago for South Kensington Museum, where it can now be seen. It is a very perfect specimen of its period.

The furniture of the time is illustrated on p. 64, a favourite scheme for the chairs and settees being the combination of carved and gilt wood framing, with the pictorial tapestries of Beauvais. While the incongruity of sitting on pictures of Arcadian shepherds, idealistic milkmaids, and genteel farm labourers, with water-mills, trees, rocks and fountains as their backgrounds will be obvious to most of us in these utilitarian days, it must be granted that the colour and texture effects were admirably blended, and with their accompaniments of panelling, porcelain, bronzes and marquetry must have made very pleasing pictures with the people who moved amongst them in their silk and satin, powdered wigs, and flowered gowns. Scenes like these the late Sir W. Q. Orchardson loved to paint, and his pictures are admirable references for the decorator to study, for out of these particular materials he makes a living scene of this bygone period.

Boule and ormolu work underwent a revival in this reign, but here again the Rococo twists and curls gave place to more sober details. Chests and commodes which had before been lavishly decorated with mixed and elaborate ornaments were now restricted to a few severe festoons, classic wreaths, or trellis work of squares or diamonds, emphasised by small floral bosses or studs. Even the Sèvres porcelain became more chaste in form and reserved in decoration. Plaques and panels of this material were often inlaid as central ornaments on cabinets and other pieces of furniture.

Bronzes again reflected the study of classical models, and many of them are both beautiful works of art and marvels of technical skill. Mirrors and candelabra continued to be a prominent feature of room decoration. Parquetry floors, coloured marbles in column or chimney-piece, carpets of colouring which rivalled in gaiety or sweetness the Beauvais tapestries, completed the usual scheme. Altogether it was a period which, if lacking the largeness and grandeur of the "Louis Quatorze," at least was more consistently beautiful, less feverish, and more reasonable than the fantastic and artificial Rococo.

*Chair carved
and gilt
covered with
red velvet*

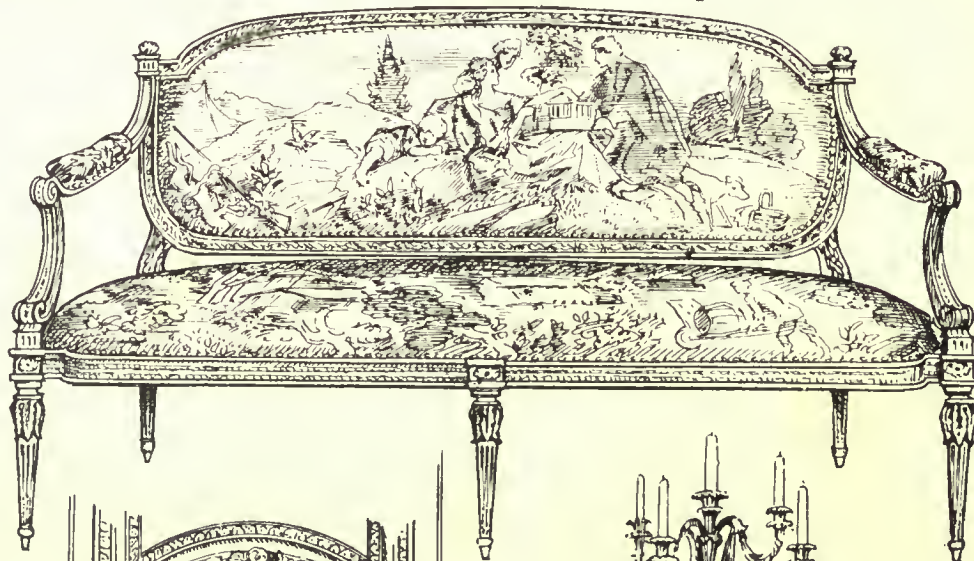


*Period
of
LOUIS XVI
(Louis Seize)*

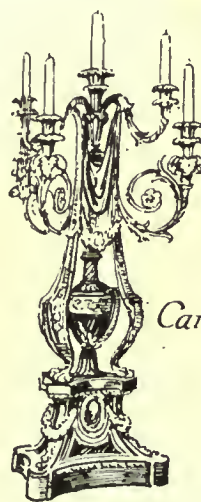
*Gilt chair
with
Beauvais
tapestry*



*Settee - carved & gilt.
~ Beauvais tapestry ~*

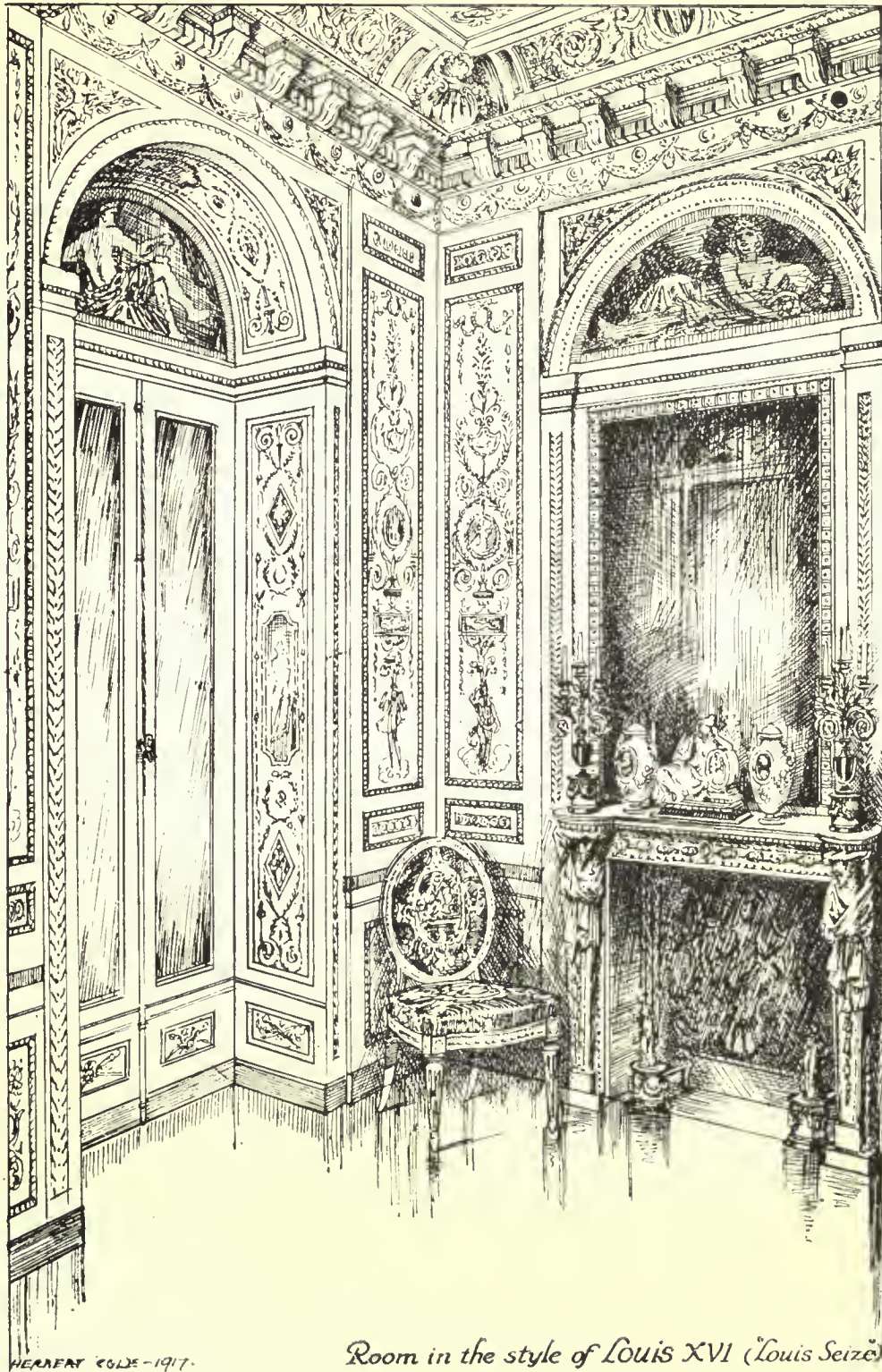


Detail of wall-panelling



Candelabrum

HERBERT COLE - 1917 -



HERBERT 1812-1917.

Room in the style of Louis XVI (Louis Seize)

CHAPTER XVII.

EMPIRE.

It has often been remarked that decoration, considered historically, is a reflection more or less clear of the social times and circumstances which gave it birth. At no time are these characteristics more noticeable than in the French styles of the 18th century. We have already reviewed the grandiose and pompous beauty of the style so sedulously cultivated by Louis XIV.—“*Le Grand Monarque*,”—and we have seen it followed by the riotous and extravagant “*Rococo*,” which owed its character to the luxurious manners and tastes of the Court of his successor, Louis XV.

A sobering down effect took place at the end of this latter monarch's reign, as if luxury had wearied itself into a state of satiety and could no more find excitement in glitter and superficial splendour. Then came the reign of Louis XVI., in which most of the decoration leaned towards the side of severity, and a sense almost of quietness prevailed.

To draw a parallel from the moods of nature, it was indeed like the calm before a storm, for this King and Marie-Antoinette, his Queen, met their fate in the tempest and upheaval of the French Revolution, falling as victims to the inevitable retribution which the sins of their predecessors had invited.

The turmoil of the Revolution was scarcely long-lived enough to imprint its state of feeling on the decorative arts of the time. Where its impress was most noticeable, perhaps, was in the costume of the day. Bizarre and uncouth fashions are to be seen in the prints, broadsides and placards of the time, which reflect the wild and uncontrolled mood of the period.

After this came the rise of Napoleon, and before many years were over, successes one after the other placed him in the highest position in France, perhaps in Europe. So popular did he become among the French that he ruled everything; nor must it be forgotten that he was statesman as well as soldier, and had an immense influence on the social life of his time. Autocratic and despotic, he considered himself able to dictate the tone of the arts of his country, and more than one instance is recorded of his attempts to dominate literary or musical artists, and to direct the course or character of their productions. Cherubini, the celebrated composer of masses and operas, gave great offence to the Emperor by his unbending disregard of the Imperial criticism.

These facts may appear irrelevant, but they show the state of affairs which prevailed under Napoleon's rule and, what is particularly apposite to our present purpose, the atmosphere in which the “*Empire*” style arose and was developed by designers working under the conditions here described.

So, after the catastrophic conditions of the Revolution, there followed a period of despotic rule under a military dictator, and the somewhat stiff and stilted style of decoration known as the “*Empire*” was the result.

Napoleon's military triumphs caused him to flatter himself that he was the rival of Cæsar, Hannibal, Alexander, and all other generals of world-renown, ancient or modern. Out of this spirit was born the love of Roman grandeur and Imperial state in which he loved to move, or maybe found it policy to assume.

The arts again held up the mirror to the Time Spirit, and we find once more a rage for Classicism in painting, sculpture and decoration, as well as in music and literature.

Costume, particularly that of the fair sex, adopted a Greek and Roman simplicity and severity. The painters chose their subjects from Homer or the Roman poets and historians; musicians and writers drew inspiration from the same sources. J. L. David, the foremost historical painter of the day, delighted in depicting heroic combats, in a dry and sculptural technique. His portrait of Madame Recamier, in spite of these defects, is a picture of great charm. The lady reclines on a Greek couch, with a slender bronze lamp near by, and her hair is bound by a fillet in the antique style. To such costumes as this the illustration on p. 68 is a fitting background, and it gives also a good general idea of the type of decoration favoured by the great Emperor.

Greek and Roman details appear in abundance; wreaths, lamps, cameos, palms and laurels of victory, axes, swords, helmets, and military trophies are grouped and bound together with fret and key patterns, honeysuckle or anthemion ornaments.

Chair-backs, bed-heads, sofas and stools took the curves and pattern of Greek or Roman furniture. Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt brought the Sphinx forms, lotus capitals and simple mouldings of Egyptian architecture into the design of French furniture, and room decoration.

Winged figures, vases, tripods, lamps and candle-stands were imitated from the remains of Pompeii. Bacchic symbols, chimeras, caryatides, and similar details were copied from Greek vase paintings or architecture.

A style so derived could not be without beauty, but it was not a spontaneous expression of the designer's natural feeling. It was something of an affectation, a pose directed by the ambitious tastes of the Emperor, and the severity and cold classicism were the outcome of his attitude as a ruler. Charles Percier, 1764-1838, and Pierre François Leonard Fontaine, 1762-1853, were two of the principal designers of the time. Napoleon made them his architects, and they built the well-known triumphal arches of Paris, Arc de Triomphe and Arc de Carrousel. They published a book on furniture design, and had a large practice.

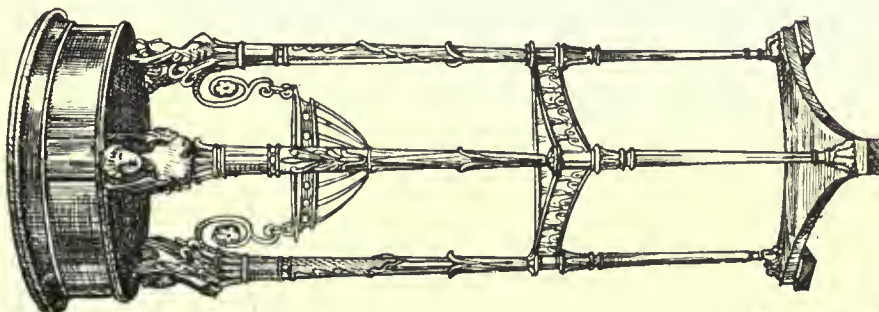
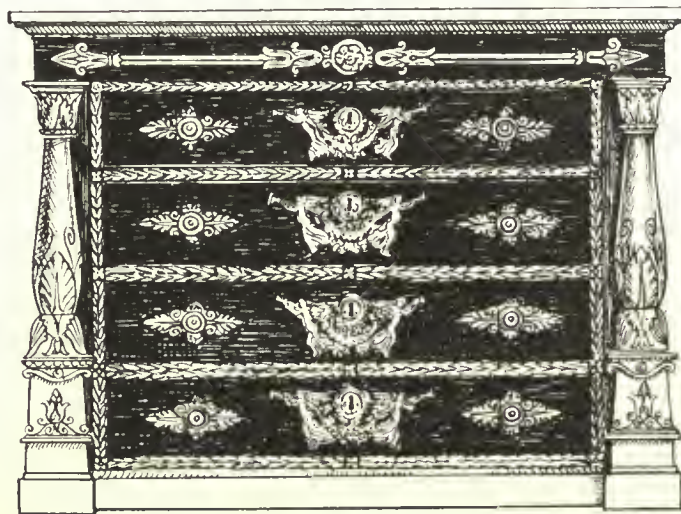
Rooms in the Empire style are to be seen at Versailles, Fontainebleau, and in the private mansions of Paris. Certain similarities of the style are to be seen in the pottery of Wedgwood and the later work of Sheraton in our own country. English designers of George the Fourth's time were considerably influenced by the French Empire style, and as in England, it dwindled away into the tasteless banalities of the Victorian period, so also in France it was followed by an epoch of either commonplace design or feeble repetitions of the Rococo and other preceding styles.

The chairs illustrating this chapter show the severity of line both in the framework and the patterns of the upholstery which the time affected, while the commode and flower-stand exhibit the use of classical or semi-Egyptian detail above mentioned.

EMPIRE STYLE
Chairs~ carved and gilt
wood covered with silk
and velvet brocade

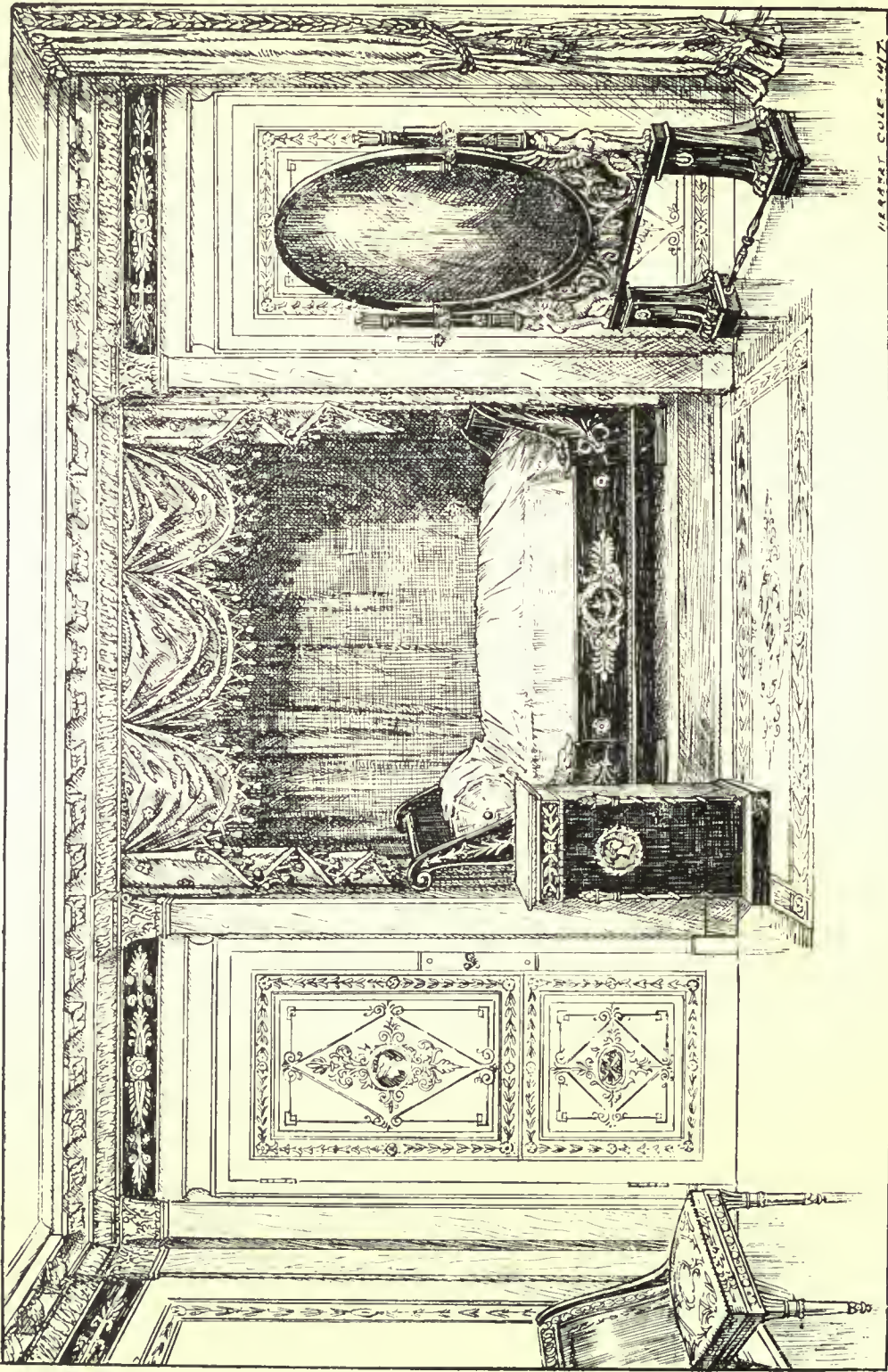


Commode
ebonised wood ~ metal mounts



Flower Stand

HERBERT COLE-1917-



Bedroom ~ Empire Style ~

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DUTCH RENAISSANCE.

While the title of this book refers only to English and French styles, the influence of Holland on our own work has been amply sufficient to justify a chapter dealing with the Renaissance in that country. The Dutch style lends itself with special appropriateness to the modest country house, and it appeals strongly to the English sense of homelike warmth and comfort. It is best exemplified by those admirable paintings of the seventeenth century, now so highly treasured in all public galleries and by private collectors, which present to us perhaps better than any other kind of historical record, the domestic life of Holland in those days. These little masterpieces, for most Dutch painting is small in scale, show us all the details of interior decoration and furniture, the pots and pans, the drinking utensils, wine-coolers, candlesticks, musical instruments, and scores of other objects, with the greatest fidelity to nature and with exquisite art. Moreover, in Holland to-day the traveller can view the interiors of the old town halls, guild halls, and other buildings, with their council rooms, banqueting halls and kitchens, which will corroborate, if need be, the faithful and loving care with which Van der Helst, Hals, Terburg, Vermeer, Metsu, Jan Steen, or the mighty Rembrandt depicted them.

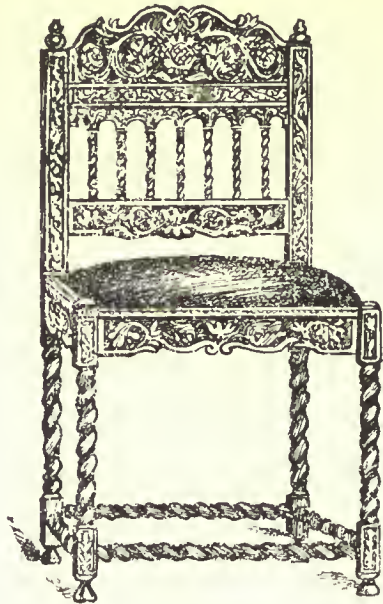
The general style is somewhat akin to our "Jacobean," and it has been shown in previous chapters that the Dutch work of the 17th and early 18th centuries had considerable influence upon our own, another reason why suggestions taken from the Dutch styles of those dates are likely to fit in harmoniously with our own decoration. We stand in a unique position, for never before were past styles so carefully studied by architects, designers and decorators, never before have period styles been so faithfully copied and revived. Whether this is a virtue or a fault we have at present no need to determine, for it is a state of things which has grown out of modern research and antiquarian interest, and could we but see into the future, it will no doubt bear fruit in the formation of new styles of decoration.

Much of the admirable domestic architecture of the past thirty years has been derived from the old English farm house, cottage, or manor, and the Dutch interiors of the 17th century are rich in the same sort of suggestion. The sketch on p. 71 is a slight attempt to give an epitome of the most characteristic features, in a simple way, of a room of this kind.

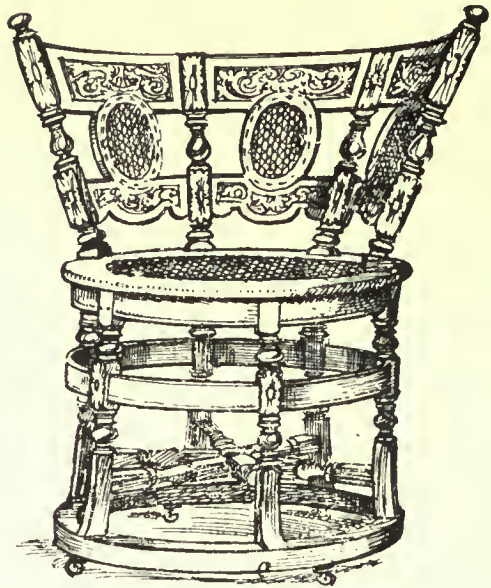
The Hollanders are notoriously a clean, neat, and careful people, and their beautiful rooms, planned for unpretentious comfort and service, reflect these admirable domestic qualities. They were fond of a tiled floor in black and white pattern, sometimes squares, sometimes lozenges, hexagons, or combined geometrical shapes, but wood floors were also frequently used. In the latter case the boards were generally waxed and polished. The fireplace was, of course, an important feature, and in this also black and white stone or marble were used for contrast of colour and effect. The tiles surrounding

the fireplace were often of the kind now known as "Dutch tiles." Hand-painted in deep blue on a white ground, the little scenes with boats, figures, churches, windmills and trees, though not perhaps great in design, are quaint and simple, and being executed with a homely and child-like tenderness, fit admirably into the general scheme. The chairs are frequently covered with a cerulean blue velvet, studded with brass nails on the edges of the back and seat. The fireplace tiles are cobalt blue, and the two colours blend harmoniously with the golden oak of cabinets and chests, and the brass work of fire-dogs, salvers, pans and candlesticks. Sometimes the furniture is of ebony or black stained woods, and occasionally leather seating, stamped and tooled or gilded, is used with equally beautiful effect. Owing to their trade with the East, the Dutch imported or imitated carpets and calicoes of Oriental design. They were fond of a Persian or Turkish rug as a table cover, and with characteristic enjoyment of colour these precious things were reproduced time after time in the paintings of the Dutch school.

The Dutchmen also frequently favoured a black frame for their pictures. Black and white both give "key" to surrounding colours, and the Dutch used them in this way with consummate art. A black-framed mirror seemed almost indispensable to a Dutch room, and here, again, the black and silver tones, with those of the floor tiles, gave a reposeful base for the blue of the hearth tiles or velvet upholstery, and the rich reds and yellows of the Eastern rugs or hangings. Their walls are generally plain tinted, and there is a restraint and absence of over-decoration, both admirable in itself and as an example to us in the adaptations we may make from their decorative schemes. Jan Vermeer, of Delft, perhaps the rarest and most refined of the little Dutch masters, employs these very tones and colours in his pictures. Those who know the National Gallery well will remember his "Lady at the Harpsichord." In it are shown the black and white floor, the grey walls, with border of "Dutch" tiles, the blue velvet upholstery, with brass nails, and the gold and black picture frames. The whole composition is suffused with the tender light for which this master is so famous, and the effect is full of that sense of cleanliness, light and air which we associate with the domestic interiors of Holland. Metsu, Terburg, and Steen were fonder of the warm red and golden tones, but Vermeer best seems to catch the spirit of Dutch interior decoration by his preponderance of cooler tones. The carved ebony chair illustrated on p. 70, shows the influence of Eastern work on Dutch craftsmanship. It is very reminiscent of the detail on Indian furniture, but not so minute, which is an advantage, as Indian ornament, though very beautiful, is generally too close and intricate. It is interesting to compare the forms on Jacobean furniture with this example, as the flowers used are evidently derived from the same sources. The carved oak cabinet, light golden in general tone, is a fine piece of work. The bits of ebony inlay and the rich

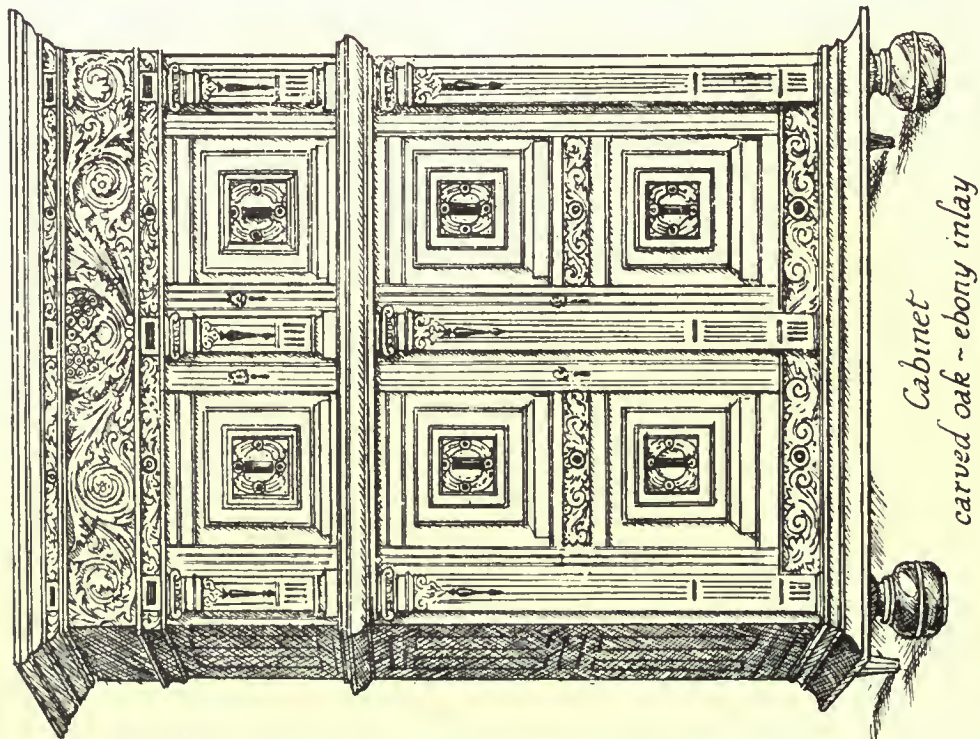


*Chair - carved & turned ebony
black leather seating - 17th cent.*



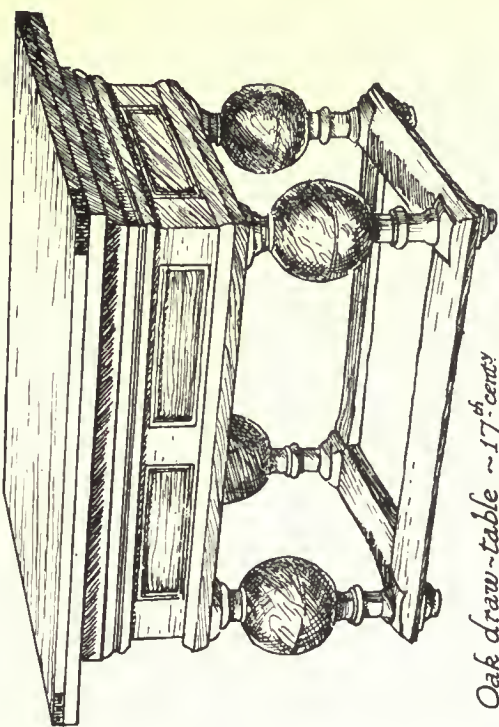
Chair - carved walnut - 17th c

DUTCH FURNITURE

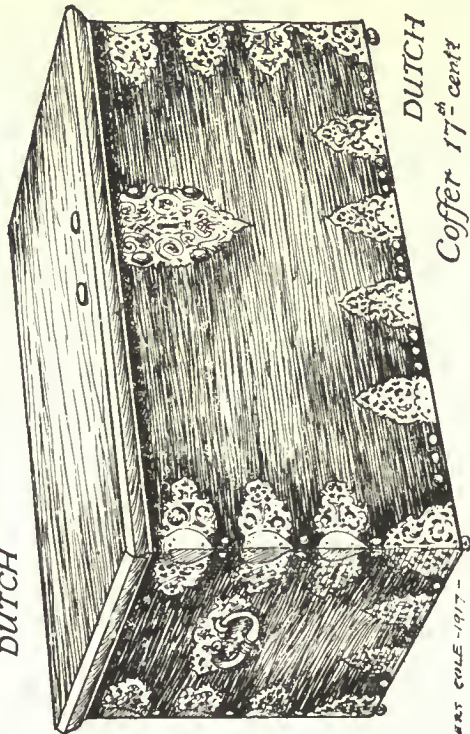


*Cabinet
carved oak - ebony inlay*

— HERBERT COLE — 1917 —

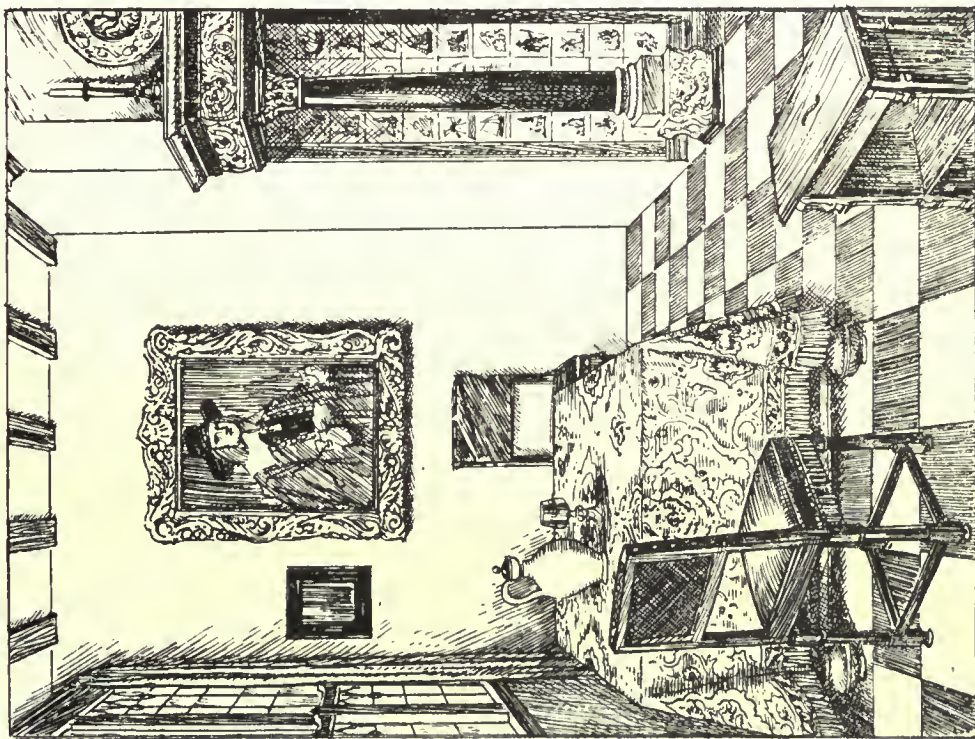


Oak draw-table ~17th century
DUTCH



DUTCH
Coffer 17th century

HERBERT COLE - 1917 -



Sketch of Dutch Interior ~

bands of carving, which are not overdone, contribute a pleasing contrast to the severe lines of moulding and pilaster which frame them in. The oak draw-table on p. 71 is another typically substantial piece of Dutch furniture. The top leaves extend, if necessary (hence its name), the centre portion, with the heavy globe legs, being purposely so designed for weight and steadiness when the table is used in the way above described.

The coffer is another fine piece of craftsmanship. It is made of dark red wood, strengthened with corner mounts and lockplate of steel perforated in rich filigree patterns. The carved walnut chair is interesting, on account of its unusual form and

construction, while its golden tones and generous lines agree well with its appearance of solid comfort and sound workmanship, both native qualities.

In these days of enthusiastic art collecting, many people possess treasures like the objects pictured in our illustrations, and in bringing them together or in redecorating a house, where they form part of the furnishing, the decorator will again find a knowledge of style helpful in harmonizing them with the general scheme. With intelligent appreciation of this kind, a sense of unity and artistic satisfaction would be obtained, whereas without it the most beautiful objects may appear only a heterogeneous and incongruous collection, purposeless and ineffective.



TABLE OF DATES.

As has been pointed out, the dates in which a period began and ended must always be quoted as approximate, rather than definite. One style merged slowly into the next, and there were, in all cases, transition periods. If that fact is borne always in mind, however, the following table will be helpful.

ENGLAND.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1509—1547 | Tudor. The accession of Henry VIII. marked the earliest beginnings of the Renaissance in England and saw the last of the Gothic style in the Tudor or flat arched phase. |
| 1558—1603 | Elizabethan, which was a transitional stage between Gothic and Classic. |
| 1603—1625 | Jacobean. The term comes from Jacobus, the Latin form of James. |
| 1573 | Birth of Inigo Jones. |
| 1652 | Death of Inigo Jones, under whose influence the Renaissance in England threw off the last vestiges of Gothic influence, and became definitely classic in character. |
| 1632 | Birth of Christopher Wren. |
| 1723 | Death of Christopher Wren. |
| 1648 | Birth of Grinling Gibbons. |
| 1720 | Death of Grinling Gibbons. |
| 1689—1702 | William and Mary. |
| 1702—1714 | Queen Anne. |
| 1714 | Accession of George I. The early Georgian style is associated with the first half of the 18th Century, up to about 1740. |
| 1684 | Birth of William Kent. |
| 1748 | Death of William Kent. |
| 1740—1760 | Middle Georgian Period. |
| 1727 | Chippendale arrived in London. |
| 1754 | Chippendale published "The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director." |
| 1728 | Birth of Robert Adam. |
| 1770 | Beginning of period of the influence of Robert and James Adam, and their contemporaries, Wedgwood, Flaxman, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite. |
| 1792 | Death of Robert Adam. |
| 1794 | Sheraton and Hepplewhite published books of designs. |
| 1795 | Death of Wedgwood. |
| 1804 | Death of Sheraton. |

FRANCE.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1515—1547 | Reign of Francis I., which period saw the decay of Gothic and the beginning of the French Renaissance. |
| 1610 | Accession of Louis XIII. |
| 1643 | Death of Louis XIII. The Louis XIII. style was the first purely French phase of the Renaissance. |
| 1630 | Gobelin Tapestry Factory established. |
| 1650—1715 | Louis XIV style. |
| 1715—1723 | "Regency": transitional. |
| 1715—1774 | "Rococo" influence, which began during the Regency, and covered the Louis XV. period. |
| 1774—1793 | The "Rococo" style gave way to the more restrained "Louis XVI." |
| 1804 | Napoleon crowned Emperor of France. It was under his influence that the Empire style was evolved. |

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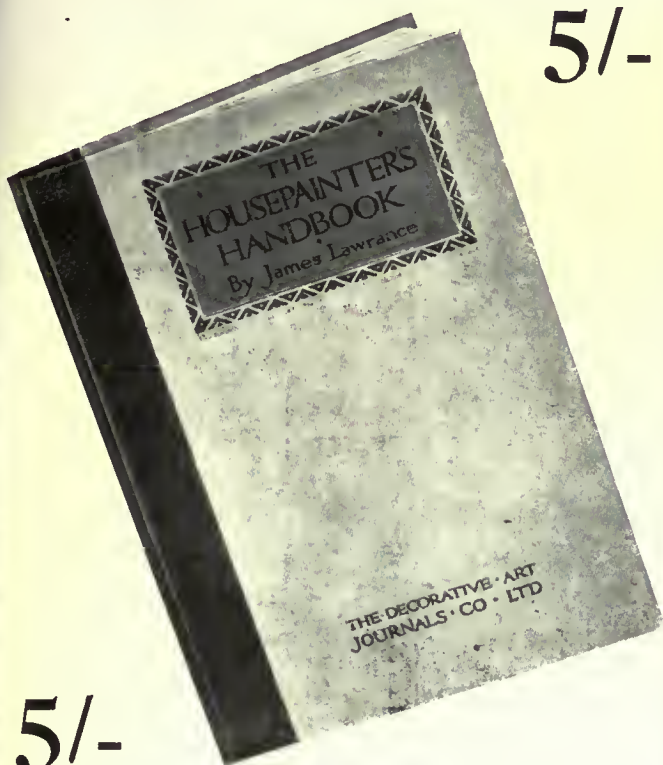
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